

The Peculiarities of a Raven



By David Ellinger

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Raven:

Staring at the ceiling is what I do first when I wake up every day, and it is what I always like to do the very first moment my eyes open up from a deep sleep. You see, I don't function well until I am fully awake and I don't know when I am fully awake until I can stare at the blank white ceiling, then wiggle my toes and have the opportunity and the time to just stare and think.

The storm last night brought some heavy rain last night to the village, and the thunder was so loud it kept me up for half the night.

"So what is my name?"

"Well, that should be an easy question for most, but for a girl of my age, it is truly a total different situation."

But you see once you label me, then I am just another character in just another filing cabinet within your mind, and also in your inner perception, and then you would and could create specific judgments, feelings, and have an overall direct attitude towards who I really am or who I should be.

Right, Wrong, Indifferent, Good or Bad.

I guess from lessons that I have learned from the past, I feel like if I gave you my name, my soul itself would just slowly bleed away, and then like a torn old Victorian picture that was taken years ago, a piece of me would fade away into an empty darkness and would simply be frozen as a fixed image in time itself.

We are not unlike all organics that first are created, then grow old and die. They say it is simply nature's way of recycling and recomposing matter. But some say there is a real magic inside of all of us, a spark, an actual light within our souls that opens our imaginations, our true beings not only in this life, but also stays within us into the afterlife.

My age, well, you can ask? But what is a number and what I am now, will I not be the same tomorrow. My body may change, and I may have felt more pain, more anxiety, and then have collected more stuff, and there may be new aches, pain, and stiffness in my joints, but my total being. My very true being and nature do not change, not really. I believe that it may evolve but I don't believe that it change the raw nature of its actual elements that God has given us.

Now my hair color is natural and it is very Gothic black. I have never colored it a day in my life, and why when it has a perfect silky black color.

That has always been the root cause of the problem or that is what I have been conditioned to believe. I swear on the family Torah that what I am about to say is totally true. I would like to point out from the very beginning that it isn't entirely my fault that I came from a line of pagan witches sworn within absolute secrecy and mystery.

As we all know, Witches are truly the most fascinating and also always the most misunderstood beings of creatures on earth. Oh, you can see by my tone that I am a little sensitive on this important and personal topic, and I may be just rambling on concerning the Craft, but I need to know that I have your absolute attention before I go any further.

It could also be very well that it is just the onset of mental dementia, but not very likely at such an early and sensitive age that I am in.

A lot of scientist and mature adults say it is solely a psychological issue and the problem is one that only cognitive therapy can capture, describe, and resolve within all of my inner neurotic and behavioral teenage issues that I have recently been having.

So let's go ahead and see if we can sort out all of my sensitive personal issues if we can.

Your see: My lipstick is black, my dress black, my hair is yes check and correct again, black.

So very simply put and to the point that I have been trying to explain is that I like black. That is the way I have always like it. Pull back, tie it with a colorful stash if necessary, and then don't mess with it throughout the day.

Don't ever let the boy's play with it. My hair is the envy of all of my friends. I am not saying this to be prideful, but just trying to be honest. Boasting truly isn't a given trait that suits me very well, and doesn't run deep in any of our family traits.

You see, I always want to be a writer when I grow up or maybe a naturalist that travels the globe far and wide in search of the missing link.

My parents are both well-educated professors that teach at the nearby local community college. Of course they have their own big dreams for me, and that maybe I will follow in their foot prints and become an educator just like they are. They always say that I should become an educated mature well informed adult who has developed the necessary critical thinking that can always make the perfect and good solid moral decisions that will help us move our society towards a greater good and also help with the overall expansion of our consciousness towards each other. See what it is like, living with two college professors.

They both wanted to have more children, but they married too late in life, and then I arrived unexpectedly.

Surprise, Here I Am? The unexpected has always been a part of my inner DNA and makeup.

With my entire parent's education that they have taken and the simple nature of the birds and the bees that is very well stated may I say in numerous soft and hard cover literary editions.

You would think that it wouldn't be too difficult to understand or put together within one's observation.

You see, I never understand that statement.

Arrived unexpectedly?

It isn't like they sent out formal invitations asking for a new roommate and that I was someone that just came out of the cold for some meatballs and cheese platters to eat with them.

My parents, honestly, do try their best, but they don't understand me. They don't understand me at all. But then again, I don't believe anyone can fully understand me. I am way too complex for that.

Now they both do understand that I do like black, and so that is what they gave me as my birthday, Christmas, and any other special occasions, the gift of black.

My favorite outfit is my tight pair of black jeans and wearing the black mossy sweater without a bra.

My mother took one look at this outfit, and told me that I would look beautiful in Pink, and had me try on a numerous Pink dresses with inserted bras the last time we went shopping together at the mall.

I was simple horrified. Pink? I just stared at her as if she just entirely lost her entire mind, lost her mind completely. Hello, is anyone there?

Black is it, it is all I wear and all I am. Pink is not me. It may be the favorite color for that cheerleader down the street but not for me, just not at all.

My dad called me his work of art in progress. He bought me for my sixteenth birthday this cool skeleton necklace and pentade earrings, real gothic silver and all. I was so excited that I almost wet my panties.

Well, I got one parent well trained, just need to get the other behavior modified. As B.F. Skinner said, "I have never seen a behavior that shouldn't or couldn't be modified in one way or another with positive reinforcement."

Now that is a true optimist: one that has eternal hope within hope itself within and by every reward and positive response.

It seems to me that it is always the natural struggle between who you are and the environment that you are put into and the functionality within.

I just can't wait to see what this new day has in store for me. True wonderment and joy, but then you never totally know for sure until you take that first step outdoors into the real world. As my mother always says, "you have to take that first step, if you want to go in any direction" I think she got that from one of her old hippie Buddha books in the closet.

Well, today is Saturday and it's my favorite time to year: Mid October.

The leaves are changing and there is a slight chill in the morning air. It had rain last night that had clean the air, and also has created a slippery film of water on them.

I just recently turned sweet 16, so today I was going to walk down to the village shops down at the harbor and see if I can get a part time job. My folks said I need to get one, and to start saving for my future. Like most teenagers, I am just having my issues with just keeping up with the present rather than to worry about the future.

Looking out of my bedroom window with the curtains open, I have a view of the large walnut trees and maples that line our street. The colors are simply wonderful and the leaves have already started to fall. I see my next door neighbor, old John racking up the leaves on his front yard.

I decided that I can't go out looking for a new job, until I put a new fresh of polish on my nails. Of course, the polish is black. Now, the question is what shade of black should I use? I just can't use any other color.

People say my best trait in addition to my black hair is my piercing blue sapphire colored eyes. My mother said it's a very good trait to have because it is one trait that doesn't change with the age of time. Being sixteen and old, I was very comforted with my mother's kind words.

My lips stick is candy black with the taste of peppermint. My mother said I am too old for flavor lipstick any more. I just buy it anyway, and wouldn't be without it. I will still be using it until I am hundred and ten. I just love peppermint. They say it is good for my indigestion too.

I can tell that my body is changing becoming more mature, but my friend's say I am way too thin and should need to buy more padded bras to help enhance my curves.

For God sake, I am just sixteen. I am a teenager, not a hooker. My friends always laugh when I make this point. I normally just wear an extra tee shirt at this point any way.

Did I tell you? No one touches my hair. That is where I draw the absolute line. I only use this one shampoo that has lavender and lemons scents. I also wear the length of my hair just over my shoulders. I was told once that I should get a short bob style. Yea, if you want to send me off to a monastery and make me a nun, otherwise forget about it, and by the way did I say hands off the hair. I don't mean just touching it, but also any personal comments about it.

Well, my nails are all dried now and if I do say for myself they look absolutely wonderful. The perfect shade of black, it's just a little bit before ten now in the morning, and the shops will be opening soon. I pulled my favorite tight black jeans on and my lucky black sweater top. I then slipped on my new skeleton necklace around my neck, and putting on my matching pagan silver earrings.

I opened up the door to my room, and headed down the staircase to our living room. The wooden stairs made a creaky noise with every step just like Old John bones next door. I held onto the wooden railing while making my way down the steps. My mother was baking already in the kitchen. I love our kitchen with dry flowers hanging for the ceiling above a round antique lace cloth covered table with a stone floor.

“Where’s dad?”

“He’s working already. You know how he likes to get an early jump on the day. So Raven, what is your schedule like today? Do you want to do some gardening with me today?”

Ok, so now you know my name. My name is Raven.

It was one of those new age hippie names that they pulled from the hat for me. In a way, it does match my personality. If they named be Sparrow, Robin, Hawk, or Eagle, then we might have some specific issues that we need to discuss. But Raven, it totally works. It is also a black colored bird.

Let me explain my name to you. My full name if you must now know is Raven Rebecca Ann Swartz. Now you know my entire name.

You see Rebecca, is my Granny’s name, may she now rest in peace. She died when I was just five. I remember the smell of butterscotch whenever I think of her. I was told that butterscotch was her favorite candy to eat. So whenever I have butterscotch or even smell it, I remember my good old granny, Rebecca.

“Thanks, mom, but I just did my nails.” “I am going down to the harbor stores and looking for a part-time job now that I am sixteen and all”

“Well, here is piece of freshly baked spice bread.”” Good luck today, and give your old mom a hug, or are you too old now to give a simple hug your mother, being sixteen and all.”

“I am never too old to give my mother a hug.”

“Be safe, and give me a call later on so I know how you are doing. Ok.” Raven’s mother then took her purse from the counter and took out her billfold. “Please take ten dollars just in case you need anything”

“Thanks, mom, I will give you a call, you are the very best.”

Raven finished the piece of spice bread with a small glass of orange juice that she got out of the refrigerator. She put on a light jacket, and shouldered her swing purse on, and off she went out the front door unto their wooden porch ready for the start of a brand new day and the hopefully successful search of the perfect very first part time job.

Village:

The trees hugging the sidewalk as their leaves are in their beautiful autumn colors adoring the mid-morning sunlight glow. Raven smiled and stretched her arms out to the endless blue sky, and said today is going to be such a special day. She waved to her Old John, the neighbor who was still raking the wet leaves in front of his house. Old John stopped raking for a minute to wave back to her.

She had a few stores in mind for a part time job. There was the small women's fashion boutique, the fruit juice bar, the ticket counter at the harbor cruises. The walk to the harbor was uneventful, but for a few squirrels that stopped their winter nut gathering to stare at her passing by. It did give her plenty time to think and ponder what job she should like and should go after. She did enjoy hearing the crunching of the fallen leaves underneath her feet as she walked the cement village sidewalks.

All of the neighborhood houses in the village all had much the same Victorian architecture with wide front porches. Most of them were already decorated for Halloween with pumpkins of all different sizes having been gathered for their traditional carvings.

A small group of sea gulls flew past overhead. Raven decided to go down to the sandy beach area first to give the shops more time to open up and not wanting to be seen as too overly anxious to be the first to arrive by the shop owners. She wanted to be seen as being cool and collected, and not to over eager looking for a job.

There was an empty hippie van at the beach that had no tires that the surf kids use as a club house. A group of boys were already in the van putting on their tight wet suits and talking about the waves, each other, and of course girls. Jason, who was one of the kids that Raven knew from school, jumped out of the van carrying his surfboard and went over to greet and talk to Raven.

"Hey Raven, what up, do you want me to teach you how to surf?" "It's a lot of fun once you get use to it" Raven, laughed, "me surf?" "The only thing that I can do with water gracefully is to drink it. I also wouldn't want to do anything that would mess up my hair."

Jason smiled, "Well it's your lost, and you don't know all of the fun that you are missing. You do know how to swim don't you or are you just afraid of water?"

"Neither, and I am definitely not afraid of water", replied Raven, starting to get annoyed with how the conversation was going, while at the same time her heartbeat seems to have doubled or may even had triple. Raven looked at Jason and she started to get even more self-conscious.

"Look your friends are calling for you, so you better get back to them."

"Well, may be another time", said Jason. "Yes, may be another time", said Raven.

Jason brushed his sandy hair back and took his surfboard and headed back towards the water.

Raven smiled. Boys, he sure has nice hair. But boys are just trouble, and who needs to learn how to surf any ways. You just spend all that time in the ocean like a bobber on a fishing line.

Raven sat on one of the nearby park bench, and watched Jason and his friends surf for a while. Jason was one of the more popular kids in school. He was also in her English class at school for third period in the school day, and she has caught him looking at her several times, and always wonders how much was he attracted to her or how much was just boy's hormones.

That was the first thing my mother taught me when I became a teenager, that boys hormones are the only thing on their minds. Hormone s were mind altering that affected boys, so they only had one thing on their mind and that was to get between my legs and up my shirt, and that I need to always defend myself from them and not let them take advantage of me in any way manner or form. If my parents had her way, I wouldn't even get my first kiss until I was in my thirties.

For it is education that is important, not lust or lower level instincts of hormones and all, unless, I want to get pregnant and then work at the local diner as a waitress for the rest of my life while living in a nearby trailer park and all.

Talking about jobs, Well, I guess I can't postpone my job search anymore, so she got up from the park bench and brushed the sand off her shoes.

Before leaving the beach, she watched Jason catch one more wave. He sure is cute, Raven said to herself. She then followed the path up the hillside to the harbor shops. The shops had all brick and stone fronts and shared the feeling and the character of a small Italian village.

Raven decided that the fashion boutique shop would be the first store to seek a job in.

She opened up the door and a small bell rang notifying that a customer had entered the store. She pretended to be looking at a few dresses and winter scarves.

She then gathered up her courage and went up to the tall well-dressed lady behind the counter. Raven knew that first impression were important so she made good eye contact and smiled: "Good morning"

"Well good morning to you, young lady, May I help you find anything, something in Black, perhaps?"

She didn't know why and maybe it was the nerves and all, but her statement made Raven laugh. It's a small town as some say, a very small harbor town. Everybody knew everybody.

Raven, summed up her courage, "Well, as a matter of fact, I am looking for a part time job. Do you have any openings?"

" Oh, I am sorry, but with the recent recession and all, we can barely keep the staff that we have."

Raven look down at her shoes, she does this often as a simple nervous reaction to any possible conflict, as if looking at her shoes might change a given situation.

She then went to the Harbor cruise ship ticket booth, and there was an older gentleman wearing a navy captain hat. He looked like a sailor, and could be identical to the face on the potato chip bag back at home in the kitchen. The man was very nice, but he too did not have any open part time positions.

It might not have affected Raven so deeply, but she then got the same answer at every store that she went to that morning. She started to feel one of her tension headaches starting to come on.

She saw that there was a small farmer's market going on within one of the main side streets. She decided to look at several of the vendors tables of jewelry. The headache was becoming stronger by the minute while thinking of where to go next to inquiry for the part time job. It was time for a break; rejection was and is such a sensitive and touchy business.

She laughed to herself, and decided to get a small ice cream cone from the malt shop nearby. Her favorite flavor of ice cream that she loved was there, and could never get enough of chocolate pecan.

She was eating her ice cream cone and her headache was just slowly getting better. A group of teenage girls walked by and smiled at her. She smiled slightly back. It was one of those groups. You know the type, all flash and no substance.

"Why do I let other girls get to me so much?"

I am just as good as they are, and Raven wonder why she wasn't in any special girl groups, but was very much the loner on the outside looking in

She then saw it; a red lettered help wanted sign in the glass store front window of the very last store in the row of red brick buildings from the malt shop,.

The store was call simply: "Curiosities and Antiquities".

Curiosities and Antiquities:

The empty sunken eyes sockets of a human skull stare into the wet rain covered street from within the show case window next to some blue and green antique bottles and a display of old surgical medical tools.

A black bird flew to the sign above the door, and almost seemed to be calling her, and demanding her direct attention.

Raven finished up the ice cream cone and smiled. It is never a bad day with chocolate pecan.

She then crossed the slippery street that was still wet from the storm from the night before. She was half way across the street when her foot went into a pot hole and she felt that she was falling, but it seemed that something invisible held her for a second so she could catch her balance. She just made it to the other side as a truck loaded with lumber passed closely by.

Her heart was really beating now. She stopped for a second to gather up her thoughts and emotions prior to entering the store. The store's door had antique stain glass window with the image of a mermaid combing its hair, and it was very heavy to open.

The first thing she notice when she entered the store was the strong scent of lavender in the air. There were several narrow tables and cabinets full of vintage and unique collectables. The light came from sky windows from the roof, and the light was reflecting off the dancing dust particles in the air.

The carpet was lush green and felt like you were walking on actual grass. She picked up a glass globe within it was Alice from Wonderland sitting under a tree reading a book.

"Vintage 1905"

"Do you like it" Raven suddenly felt self-conscious and quickly put the Alice from Wonderland globe back down on the table, and turned to the voice that was standing directly behind her.

An old elderly lady with a sea glass green necklace from the roaring twenties and wearing plain round wired glasses was smiling and looking kindly at her. Her hair was almost pure white as snow, and was tightly braided in a weave. Raven has seen this lady several times before in passing in the village but has never been formally introduced to the lady before in person.

“Good morning, young lady”, she said to Raven. “The first thing you need to know” is that you should never touch the merchandise because you never know what you may pick up. “You see you must always ask for its permission”. “How would you like it if someone picked you up and started playing with your hair” Raven dropped her head as if it was an automatic reflex. “Don’t they teach you anything in school” “Please look at me when I am talking to you, I must say that I am much more interesting than the dust mites crawling on the dam floor”

“That also reminds me, there is a vacuum in the far corner. “Please start vacuuming, you do know how to clean, of course you do, or is that something I have to teach you also? Raven reaction wasn’t what she expected, she starting to cry.

“Poor, Poor, Girl, I know it’s your hormones and well I know I have been told numerous times by other folks, that I can be lacking in the necessary social graces at times. But you know, there are always so many things to do, and so little time. Don’t you agree?”

“But you know, the cleaning can wait; let’s get to know each other more before we start all of the work that needs to be done. Shall we have a glass of tea? I have just made a fresh batch of herbal green tea, with just a dash of chocolate and pecans?” Raven took out a handkerchief from her purse and wiped her tears away.

“What a way to have your first job interview? You are here for the job aren’t you? I must say that I am not much of an interviewer either.”

“Don’t you worry though my child, for what I lack in social graces, I make up with my extraordinary intuitive abilities, by the way has anyone every told you that you worry too much.”

“All of the time”, replied Raven nervously. She didn’t want to release too much information as she was thinking this lady was a little bit on the unstable side and all.

She walked Raven to the back of the store to a small kitchen area with her hand over Raven’s shoulders, where there was a small stove next to a circle oak table with an antique white lace table cloth on top.

She pour some tea out of the kettle into two small black rose porcelain cups and gave one to Raven.

The herbal tea was exactly what the doctor has ordered and seemed to settle Raven’s nerves.

“So Raven, Welcome to Curiosity and Antiquities.”

” I am so glad that you came in, we are going to be just the best of friends. You did come in regarding the help wanted sign in the store front?”

“Yes, I saw the sign from the malt shop across from the street.” I just turned sixteen, and I really need a part time job to start saving money for college.

“Excellent child, just excellent, not only are you a hard work but you want to be well educated. Don’t ever be embarrassed of whom you are child, or who you want to become. Just before you entered the store, my Angel’s told me that you were going to be my next store keep. Since I woke up out of bed, they have been showing me visions of a divine picture of you holding a Raven. Doe’s a Raven mean anything to you? “

It’s my name”

“Your name? just splendid , absolutely splendid my dear, just what the Angel’s told me. My name by the way is Holly. Just like in Christmas Holly. You know they are simply never wrong my dear, never.”

“Who are never wrong”, said Raven

“The Angels of course”.

“You have one standing right next to you now, don’t move or else you will scare it always” Oh my you do take everything way too seriously. Now just close your eyes, Raven. Try not to think of anything, let your mind simply wonder and go anywhere it needs to go. What do you now see my child?”

“I see a gothic church, and there are rose petals on the floor, and there is a stone alter that has carvings of a garden with vines and oak leaves. Hundreds of candles are lite and are reflecting off the walls with beautiful murals of Angels and Saints.”

“Excellent, Excellent, my child, please continue on”

What are you wearing? “I am wearing a beautiful white lacy dress.” “Do you see any angel next to you?”

“I think so, I do feel someone holding my hand, but there is no one there. I am feeling like I am now being lifted onto a stone table. My heart is beating and my hands are both starting to sweat.”

“Don’t worry Raven, I am here with you.” “Holly, My body is starting to levitate above the stone table.”

“It’s ok, Raven, I am her with you” “Just remember to keep on breathing” “Take a breath in, and then release, then take another one”

“How do you feel?” “I feel intense heat entering throughout my body, and it is now moving down between my legs, into my stomach area, to my breasts, and then into my throat, and skull area. I am seeing a beautiful angel now holding my head and stroking my hair. My whole body is starting to shake, and getting more and more excited. The air around me is becoming very sensual in nature, and every inch of me is starting to vibrate and tingle. I feel like I am going to explode into thousands of stars of true ecstasy. I am starting to, oh my god, oh my god, what is happening to me. She felt like every cell in her was exploding at once.

Raven, gasp, and suddenly opened her eyes wide, and she was unexpectedly no longer sitting at the lace covered table in the back of the store having tea, nor was she on the stone table of where her visions took place, but now she was standing silently outside the store holding a long straw broom sweeping up the leaves.

It was twilight and evening was approaching with a fog bank entering the harbor and rolling in from the ocean into the village.

“Well, there you are? Well, it’s time to dose up shop now?”

Raven wondered what just happen to her. One minute she was sipping on a cup of herbal tea around noon time, and now it was almost evening outside of the shop.

Holly smiled at her. “You passed the test, you got the job. Now remember it is only part time. Come back tomorrow and we can finalize your schedule for the whole week.”

Raven handed the broom to Holly still not fully understanding what just occurred to her.

“Thank you again. Dear, and see you tomorrow.”

” Get some sleep, it always good to get a full night sleep when you are young and growing”

Raven started to tremble again and wondered what had just happen to her. She started walking home and felt a cold numbness though out her body. She looked down at her legs and her black jeans were completely soaked and wet with perspiration.

As she got closer to her house, she could see the glow of the yellow porch light. Under the porch light were her mother and dad on the bench sitting nervously together for her arrival home.

Her mother spoke first, “What happen to you? Why didn’t you call us? We are both worried half to death about you, when you didn’t return this afternoon or answer your phone. We were about to call the police”.

“I know mom, dad, I should have called, but everything is alright now.

“Are you sure”, as they both knew when Raven was trying to over sell one of her lies.

“Yes, I am fine, and I am home now”. “Really I am just fine; I am not small child anymore”.

“In any case you should be exited for me, I got some wonderful news. Today, I got my first part time job.
“

“Congratulation” “We are so very proud of you” “Next time you have to call us if you are running late.”

“Now go ahead and get yourself dean up. You look like a total mess, and how did your jeans get so wet.”

“I also have saved dinner for you, and it is your favorite meal vegetable lasagna.”

Raven gave her a big hug. "Are you ok?" "I am fine, Mom" "Let me just go first and clean-up for dinner, and I will then tell you all about my day."

She then ran upstairs to her room.

Only Raven knew that everything wasn't alright, and nothing would ever be or could be the same for her again.

She was starting to get concern. She felt very nauseous and felt cramping in her midsection. She went to the bathroom and looked into the mirror and her face was a pale light gray. She quickly lifted up the toilet lid and started to vomit. Not just the oh my gosh I overate vomit, but the type that you do when you get the stomach flu. Raven has been asked numerous times if she was bulimic and anorexic due to her height and weight.

She didn't vomit as a habit and really didn't have a body image issue. But body image wasn't on her mind right now, but vomiting definitely was.

It seemed like it has been at least ten minutes of pure vomiting into the toilet, and her head seem to start spinning in circles. All of a sudden she saw or imagined a hand or was it a claw that reached out of the toilet and grasped her long black hair. She screamed, but as she screams it seemed as if her whole entire body was being lifted up into the air and pulled into the toilet. The strange part of it all, at least to raven at the time was how her body seems to stretch like taffy.

Not the small sea salt taffy, but you know the type. The long flat bar type that you can stretch from a few inches into a three foot long or longer piece. She remembered taking one last deep breath, and then it was as if she was in a tunnel, or was it the copper plumbing. She felt water rushing by her and she decided not to open her eyes but could feel it in her ears.

It was her first time being flushed; I guess that is what you would call it. I guess there just isn't any nice or polite way of saying it.

Maybe this is the tunnel that people experience when they are having an afterlife experience. But shouldn't there be a light shining in front of her. She opened her eyes, and only darkness reflected back. She felt every turn and pull of the flushing process and one time she felt as if she had gotten stuck , then there was a sound not unlike the sound of a loud vacuum and out she went.

She landed in what seem to be mud. It at least felt like mud. She feared the worst and put her hand up to her nose. It smelled like peppermint. Well it could be a lot worst; I could have fallen into S---

Bird Land:

“Hey you there, what are you doing? Can’t you read the signs?”

Raven was still getting her bearings and she hit her head hard while landing so she was just starting to get her focus back. Standing in front of her was a human size Red wing black Bird.

“Are you for real?”, as raven held her head that had a bump the size of a goose egg.

“Girl, get it together will you. If they, The Canaries find you first, they are going to put you in a locked cage and make you sing the same song over and over again for your daily seed. Do you get my drift my featherless friend?”

“Where are your feathers anyway, no feather’s, no wings, and you look like a straight bean poll”

“A total mess that is what I see before me?” “What am I going to do with you” “Now if brother, hawk sees, you, one two three, meal time, you know what I mean.”

Raven was simple amazed and couldn’t believe she was looking at a human size red wing black bird that was actually talking to her. “You are definitely not around here and definitely, not a talker.” “You are not a worm are you, your pale and you came out of the mud” “If I had the clear sense within me, I would eat you and be done with it” “Well, not all at once, you would give me indigestion, but I would break you up into smaller pieces, and freeze dry pieces of you, so you could last all winter long in the deep freezer”

Raven started to cry. “Oh, here we go again”, “True drama in the hood. Ok, I got an idea, and it just may work, at least short term. My misses and I have a nest of eggs, and we really need to have some of our own time, you know what I mean, personal time. But those darn eggs are getting in the way and they need constant warming. Have you ever done any egg warming before? “

Raven shakes her head, “well this is not promising at all, not at all.” Raven saw that she needed to help the matter and then tried to smiled, “I have done some babysitting in my neighborhood were I came from, I watch the children and the houses while the parents go out to have a break from child rearing.”

“Then you do have some skills, may God have mercy on us now and may the heavenly chorus start to sing”

“Ok, here is the deal, you need to get out of this mud bath right away” “You then come home with me, and I will show you how to do egg warming properly, and you can stay with us for the night.” “You will be totally safe”

“How does that sound”

There was a big noise that just sounded which echoed through the mud flats that raised every hair on Raven's back. It was also getting darker by the minute and the night was starting to closing in all around her.

There wasn't anyone else to talk to or any other good options before her, Raven took a deep breath. She was told never to talk or go with a total stranger, and how much stranger can you get then this talking red wing black bird that was jive talking in front of her. Raven thought carefully to herself before making a final decision.

"Ok, I agree", reply Raven. "Excellent, my little lassie" "Let's shake wings on it" "Sorry forgot you have no wings."

"So how are we going to do this," said raven getting a little impatient and concern about where the last howling came from and that it sounded like it was closer and was starting to close in around her.

"Ok, let's get going", the large red wing black bird laid down next to raven, "go ahead and jump on, hold on to the rope that I just tied around my mid-section."

"Just like a horse", said raven. "A horse, what is a horse?" said the red wing black bird. Before raven had a chance to answer, the red wing back bird was in mid-flight.

Raven felt the breeze against her face and body, and she was afraid to look down. The ride was more comfortable than raven thought. She could tell that he was trying not to make any sudden turns or maneuvers that would startle her or bounce her too much.

It was now getting darker and darker; raven really couldn't see much of anything in front of her. Then she saw them, they were lights in the distance by the foothills of the mountains that were flickering.

"Is that where you live?" "Yep, that is where we all live."

"It's Bird land." As they got closer, raven would see the outlines of large trees that were larger than redwoods that had hanging lanterns that you would be able to be seen in a Chinese garden.

It was a perfect landing, and the red wing black bird took off his rope. "Welcome, to my humble abode"

This made Raven giggle, and then all hell broke loose. The Screen door blew wide open almost off its hooks, and there she was Mrs. Red wing black bird, Mrs. RWB for short.

"Now just calm down, I can explain." "The heck you can, what are you thinking of? Bringing this trashy filthy featherless bony little thing to our home, our sacred beloved love nest with our eggs, and what do you think the neighbors are going to say?"

"Oh, here you go again, making quick emotional assumptions, without listening to me first."

“Mrs. Peacock, I know you are watching from behind that tree branch over there, please kindly go inside your own nest this is strictly a personal issue between Mr. RWB and myself. I am about to peck both her eyes out seeing that you can’t keep her eyes to herself any more. Oh, my mother told me there was going to be these days, these lousy days of infidelity and sinful acts of the night, and especially after laying all those beautiful eggs of ours. “

“You need to calm yourself, you are getting all excited for nothing, and this is all a terrible misunderstanding. You know I love you and only think of the whole world of you. I brought her to you for egg sitting. I know it hasn’t been easy for you the past few weeks, taking time off from work, and laying all those eggs at once.”

Mr.’s RWB stated to tear up, and then it turned into sobbing, and then wailing. “It’s been just awful, just awful, I had dreams you know, real dreams. I could have been a star in the Flock by Night Theater group. A huge star and you even told me that I had the best singing voice.”

“You do dear, you still do.”

“This is no threat dear, but a present, so you can still get out and do your nightly theater groups and socialize. O I love you RWB.” They both turned to look and to see where raven was and she was gone.

While the two of them were arguing, raven saw an opening and took off running.

They saw that Raven was gone, and it all started over again.

“You see what you did? This is your entire fault, you should have brought here in the first place. The arguments got even louder and more intense with sharp point then counter point debate. Eventually, they were both exhausted and they both gave up and went inside their tree nest and slammed the door tight.”

Raven was hiding in the bushes by the next door neighborhood tree and was going to wait for them to go back inside the tree nest before she felt safe to go anywhere. She then saw an opportunity while they were distracted while arguing with each other and made a fast break for it.

“I can’t be an egg sitter, who knows how long the eggs needed to be sat upon.”

“Where am I anyway and what type of place is this anyway called bird land? It’s defiantly not my hometown on the harbor.”

“I am sure that Mom and Dad are wondering where I am while noticing that I have been gone for a while. Raven felt very sad all of a sudden. “It is simply no time to be home sick. I just need to find a way out of this bird land place. I can’t be the first person that ever got flushed before and probably wouldn’t be the last.”

I need to find a safe place to rest for the night. There has to be somewhere close by that I can rest and hide for a while, until I can get a clear bearing and understand what my next steps should be.

Suddenly from the tree, a glow worm lowered itself by spinning a single web of string. In seconds, it was staring upside down at raven. "Boo"

Raven almost jumped completely out of her tight black jeans. "You just scared the life out of me."

"Really?" replied the glow worm. "It really is not in our nature to cause such a fright, but you looked so alone from above and well the night is when I glow my best. I can change color's did you know that"

"No I didn't", replied raven.

"I can take you to where it will be safe for your tonight. You have to trust me for my home is high on top of the tree."

Raven thought of her options, and she realized that she was really getting too sleepy to make any more decisions.

"Ok, Mr. Glow. It is a deal, but no funny business or I will squeeze all the glow juice out of you if you try to harm me in any way, got it!"

"Yes, of course, a true gentleman glow worm indeed I will be."

"Well you first have to lift up those things that are attached to your body"

"They are called arms" said Raven.

"Yes, please, can you lift your arms up", so Raven lifted up her arms, and glow worm worked extremely fast spinning a secure harness for her.

"I will go ahead and get a hammock sling ready for your arrival where you can spend the night. I will then start pulling you up slowly with the harness. It won't take that long at all but you will have to stay as still as you can. You have to trust me, ok?"

"This is so much fun to have a slumber party, don't you agree?"

Raven made a small smile that looked more like a smirk, but it made the glow worm glow even more.

Raven felt tension on the cord connected to the harness, and she was slowly lifted into the air on her way up the Mr. Glow's bungalow house. She looked down only once but then decided not to again. She also started to spin but was able to steady herself by touching the tree branches on her way up as they pass by.

The darkness seemed to fade more and more as she got to the top of the tree. There was Mr. Glow looking at her when she arrived. "Congratulations, you made it"

"Now all you have to do is pull yourself onto this sturdy limb and then you will see the hammock that I made for you."

Raven used all of her muscle strength and barely made it on to the limb, and then she saw the beautiful hammock with a pillow made out of leaves. She took it very slow and was very cautious as she climbed onto the hammock and it held her weight fine without any issues at all.

"Well, thank you Mr. Glow. You are a Worm of your honor."

She adjusted the pillow and looked up and she saw thousands of Glow worms all singing a sweet lullaby to her.

"You see, us glow worms are not bad, we are just a little too luminous at times."

Raven thought about her day and her adventure so far. Being put on a stone sacred altar, and then being flushed onto the mud flats, and then the meeting with Mr. RWB and Mrs. RWB.

Boy, what a dysfunctional couple of birds they were.

Raven closed her eyes and slept finally overtook her entire tired body, mind, and soul.

Mr. Glow worm looked down and smiled from a nearby tree limb. "Isn't she the most beautiful creature you have ever seen?" "I believe I am falling madly in love."

Raven fell asleep without even knowing it, let out some nasty smelling gas as little farts within the night. The gas lingered for more than a few minutes. The other glow worms started to hold their noses. One worm acted like it was dying because of it.

"I don't care", said Mr. Glow worm. "Gas or no Gas, Amore, love eternal." As Mr. Glow fell fast asleep so did the other glow worms and the silent hush of the night came to be.

The morning came and the sun reflected off the tree tops.

Raven woke up and screamed. For looking down at her was a giant Seagull eating Mr. Glow worm for an early breakfast.

"Breakfast, my Dear"

Raven backed up into the hammock.

"You are not thinking of eating me for early morning desert also are you? The Seagull thought it was an interesting question, but shoved another glow worm into its beak instead before it would answer her.

"You don't look like a very tasty desert", "much too bony for my taste."

“I would be fishing out your bones for months after I have eaten you. Way to high maintenance that’s what you are, the seagull gave Raven a strange feeling that he was not one to be trusted in any way, manner or form.”

Three adolescent crows with cigarettes hanging out of their beaks landed on a nearby tree limb to see what all the commotion was about. They seem to know the Seagull, and they all said, “Hi, Jake, what did you find here. Are you going to share her with us?”

Jake said to the boys, “you all know what I am going to do to her and you would all be right” The crows were all intrigued with Raven. The leader of the group, the largest of the three, jumped near Raven’s head, and pulled a string of hair from her head.

Raven scream and tried to fight back to no success. “Look brothers, I got myself a trophy”, “I am going to put this into my nest when I get back from school.” Blood started to run down Raven’s face where the crow had taken the piece of her hair. The other crows got jealous and one of the other two position itself so it too could also retrieve a piece of raven’s hair for a prize.

“Instead, I think I will take my cigarette and burn her face first.”

Raven was getting terrified as the nasty little crow got closer to her face with the cigarette.

Jake the seagull had seen enough. He had let the boys have their time of fun, but saw that Raven was getting more and more traumatized by the events that were occurring.

“Enough, Boys” “You are already late for school, and I know both your parents, so off with you now, you all had your fun.” The smaller of the crow glared at Jake the seagull; “oh you just want her for yourself”. “You are just being selfish and mean again, Jake”

A new crow had just arrived. This one was larger than all three boys combined and had the feeling of a parent authority.

The crows knew it was time for school so they didn’t wait to see what the parent crow was about to say, and off in flight they soared into the air.

“Bye Jake, It’s been fun, See you later gator, after school maybe”

The large crow just shook its head, Raven notice a scar on the right side of its face.

The large crow then spoke to Jake. “You know what the hardest thing is these days, Jake”

Jake just smiled and then replied, “Knowing and living with your three boys, I can just image.”

The parent crow laughed. It then flew next to Raven, and Raven covered her face expecting to be attacked again.

“I want to apologize to you in person for my boys” “I am a single parent and raising them hasn’t been any easy task for me. They really are not so bad little crows once you get to know them.”

Raven nodded, still with her hands over her face just in case the bully gene came from her side of the family.

“Jake, you take care of yourself now. I got to go work and pay the bills”, and the crow then took flight and disappeared into the sky above the trees.

Jake the seagull was once again alone with Raven.

“Well, the way I see it, you got two real choice in front of you, wait a week until the new crop of glow worm hatches, and then they can string you back down to the town floor, or you can jump on my back and I can drop you off where I do my taxi business. I know you don’t trust me, but what does trust have anything to do with it at this point.”

Raven within every ounce of her body knew that trust had everything to do with what she should do next or not do next.

“Ok, but, I don’t owe you anything for the ride?” “Agreed?”

“No strings attached”, laughed Jake the Seagull.

Raven climbed onto Jake’s back and off they went above the tree canopy. They flew toward what look like a large body of water. Jake was headed for a small village by the coast of the sea. He made a perfect landing, and the building in front of them had a sign that stated: “Jake’s Garage and Taxi Service.”

“Well, we made it. If nothing more, I am a seagull good on my own word. You are free to go with no strings attached, but I got to go now and open up shop. I am already getting behind on my work schedule and way past the normal opening time.”

The Day of the Dead:

Raven stood on the hard dirt side walk, and took in the breath, feeling and sounds of the new village. There were no trees as bird land had, but it was like a town out of the old Wild West. There were sage bushes and tumble weeds that slowly rolled past. There was a broken wagon wheel next to a carriage that looked like it was in the process of being repaired. There was a string of red chili peppers hanging in the arch way of Jake's garage. A real Mexican western town thought Raven to herself. She could hear a mariachi band starting to perform down in the village town square. She heard shouting and singing like a real festival was happening. "It's a little too early to have a celebration."

Raven decided to see what all the celebration was about. She crossed the street and started walking towards where the music and celebration was coming from. She past what looked like the village store that was selling dry goods and stables. She walked by two barrels, one full of old rusted horse shoes and another one that was just full of nails.

What was interesting was that she hasn't seen a single horse in the village so far, only talking birds and glow worms so far. She then past what looked like an iron smith shop with an old fashion anvil stone brick oven for metal working. She noticed that one shop after another was completely empty, but the celebration noise was getting loud and louder as she approached the village square.

She smiled at a cutout of a cowboy with a lasso wearing some mighty fancy cowboy boots.

"Well howdy, there, cowgirl", as the cutout tipped his one gallon hat towards Raven.

Raven jumped back not expecting a cardboard cut-out to be talking to her. She looked closer at the cut out and it wasn't a cutout at all but a large giant puzzle made out of thousands of individual pieces.

"Puzzle?" the cowboy winked at her.

Raven replied, "No just not use to talking to a puzzle that all." You do look familiar though, I think I know where. I remember my dad had a picture of himself when he was a child holding a rag doll that looked just like you. It was his favorite rag toy, and took it everywhere he sent as a child.

"Rag's to Riches' that's what I would say,

Raven just rolled her eyes". "This really can't be real." What is going on in the village square anyway?"

"You mean you don't know?"

“I wouldn’t be asking the question, is there some saw dust in your ears or are you just as simple as you look.” “No reason to be cruel or sarcastic my friend, today is the day of the dead. All that is dead and buried is now coming back alive again for just this one day.”

Suddenly a wooden gate appeared in front of them that just a second ago wasn’t there. A lady in a Mexican gown that was tightly fitted to her beautiful figure, open up the gate and had on skeleton make up with a beautiful rose in her ear.

She was holding a crystal glass that looks like it was full of human blood.

The puzzle cowboy started to shake and a couple of his pieces fell to the ground.

“I know I just met you miss, but I don’t like how this all looks as he was putting his pieces back into place. I don’t think it would be in your self-interest young lady to go in there, better to turn around and go back where you came from. That lady is nothing more than death itself talking to you.”

“Don’t listen to him, come drink and party with me my pretty young lady”, said the painted skeleton woman to Raven. You look thirsty, tired, and in very much need of safe a place to take a rest.”

The skeleton lady then started to hum, a tune that was so lovely but also somewhat eerie at the same time that sweetly seemed to wash over her and putting her into a trance.

Raven pushed back the cowboy as he was trying to hold her back. Raven got up to the gate, and the mistress of death in white held her hand out seductively to Raven.

Raven touched her hand and she felt an emotional release of inner tears and felt as if she was even more intoxicated within her spell.

“Come dance with me my dear sweet innocent child” and she help walk Raven through the gate and they started to immediately dance and twirl together.

She gave Raven the glass of human blood, and said, “Drink my dear, drink all of it, and drink the blood of death itself”. She then started to pull raven more and more into her warm deep embrace. Their bodies were now touching, and she could feel her heart beat racing next to hers. Their dancing leads them to the entrance of the village square and raven gasp.

There was a mariachi band of four skeletons playing on a small wooden platform stage, but the square itself was full of real vultures tearing at dead cow’s carcasses with their organs and intestines coming out of their bodies.

“Kiss me now Raven and it can all be all over. No more nightmares, No more torments, or Pain”

Raven pushed death itself away and saying “for God sake I ’am a Vegetarian.”

All the vultures stopped what they were doing and turned all at once toward raven, "Really, Are you kidding us?"

"Yes, Really" "I have always been a Vegetarian all of my life" The vulture looked at each other and said as if all at once. "Well, there is a first time for everything and a side salad is always good with one's meal. They started to approach Raven as the skeleton women griped her shoulders making sure she couldn't move. Raven knew at once what their intentions were and it was to definitely have her as their first vegetarian meal of the day. Their eyes were red and foam was coming out of their mouths like mad cow disease.

She suddenly felt a lasso that knocked the skeleton lady to the ground and slipped around her waist. Raven felt a tug first and then a pulling that started to drag her out of the village square and back through the gate. The vultures didn't have time to respond and could not go through the gate themselves. So they just stared at her and shouting.

"Filthy, dirty, vegetarian you are? Be gone, and don't you ever come back"

Once through the gate, the puzzle cowboy gave Raven that look of I told you so. Raven, stare back and said, "don't you lecture me now." "I am not like you with all the puzzle pieces of life still needing to be put together to have a total picture." The cowboy laughed, "You don't even have all of your pieces yet to be able to make good decisions for yourself. I know how intoxicated death can be, she can be very alluring."

"Oh, now you are sounding like my dad"

"Well someone has to be the adult here, and by your recent actions, I would say that specific adult would be me."

Raven just rolled her eye, and then waiting for the punishment and final judgment that seemed to be coming her way any second now, but the puzzle cowboy surprised her.

"Here take this bag of gold", I don't need it being a puzzle cowboy and all.

Raven kissed the puzzle cowboy on the cheek and took the bag of gold.

"Thank you, Thank you for all you did for me today. I will remember how kind you have been to me and the inner truth within your words that you have given me."

The puzzle man sat down on the wooden bench next to the stables. "You know what I have learned the most so far within all of my travels, that life doesn't have to be so much a puzzle, if you just take it only by one piece at a time", and Raven gave him one last hug. She then started down the lonely tumble weed road leading out of town.

There was a tavern at the edge of town where she decided to freshen up and spend the night. The bedroom was small, but she had room service of beans and rice, and corn bread.

She was also able to take a warm bath which was the first in a very long while. All of her muscles started to relax. "I don't know what I would have done without Mr. Glow worm or Puzzle cowboy these past couple of days. Without the kind help of strangers on this journey she would have been in a much worse situation. She couldn't keep her eyes open any longer, as she crawled into her bed and pulled the sheets over her head and fell fast asleep. Just maybe, just maybe, I will wake up tomorrow, and all this would be a very bad dream or some type of very strange misunderstanding. I would be just home again with my stuff animals and family again, home at last, home at last.

The Circus:

The sun was barely coming through the dusty window covers of her hotel bedroom when there was a loud knock on the door. Raven didn't wake up right away but was still in a very deep sleep. Her dream was a boy model was putting chocolate pecan ice cream over his entire body.

There was another loud knock and then a loud voice came through the door stating that there was a message for Rebecca Ann Swartz.

Raven put on the robe that was next to her bed, and starting toward the door. "Coming" She replied simply not wanting to have her name yelled out so loud again. "Not that she had any issues with her name."

She took the lock off the door and opened it. Standing in front of her was a well dress Messenger Pigeon that was taller than she was with very broad shoulders and a thin waist from carry daily large bags of mail.

The messenger pigeon bowed its head to Raven as if she was a lady within a medieval court.

"I am very sorry to disturb you my lady so early in the morning, but I have a package for you." The Messenger Pigeon took a small package that was tied to its leg, and gave it to Raven.

"You have to sign for it", and gave Raven a clipboard with a signature page and a pen to write with.

She signed it Raven and handed it back to the Messenger Pigeon. "Thank you very much, Miss Raven, and I am so sorry to have disturbed you again." Raven, reached into her robe, and found a coin that she had put there, and handed it to the Messenger Pigeon as a tip.

"Oh, thank you so kindly miss, thank you very much"

"Have a nice, day" Once the Messenger Pigeon had left, Raven quickly shut the door and place the lock back into place.

She put the package on the table near the door and decided to get dress first before opening it up,

After slipping on her cloths, she looked at the package carefully. It was a medium size package wrapped with brown paper and tied with simple twine. She untied the twine and then carefully opened up the package. The brown packaging revealed a red cloth that felt like something was endosed in it, and she carefully opened it.

There was a diamond vintage spider broach. There was a note that stated, please take this item as a token of our hospitality of our fine village, and please meet me on pier nine at twelve o'clock for lunch.

Signed: The Sheriff.

Raven looked at the brooch and said, "I can't accept this, this is way too expensive, even for a new visitor gift" The letter had the stamp of the county court on it and did look very official.

"I surely haven't done anything wrong, and maybe this will be a perfect opportunity to get some answers to where I am now and how I can get back myself home." Raven looked at the brooch in her hand and the diamonds sparkled and there were two tiny rubies for its eyes. This is way too cool said Raven, and pinned it to her sweater.

There was a comb on the dressing room table with a small mirror. She took the comb and started straightening her hair. She saw where the Crow has taken a piece of her hair, and fortunately it was in a spot that she was able to comb over and hide for the most part.

She took a deep breath and sigh, it really must get better, at first it was exciting to be on a new adventure and to be in a new land, but she was now definitely home sick and wanted to get back home in her own bed as soon as possible, and she wondered about her new job. I am sure Holly has already missed her, and may have already given her job to someone else. She put on her lipstick and said well; let's see what is in store for me today and went for breakfast downstairs. The hallway was completely empty of birds or people, but there were fresh flowers in small red and green wall vases that made her smile. She walked down the stairway and she past the bell counter where stood the blue and green parakeet that gave her the room the night before.

"Was the room satisfactory?" "Oh, very much, Sir", replied raven.

"Fine, Just Fine, If there is anything that you need that will make your stay more enjoyable while you are staying with us please don't hesitate to ask" There was a group of night Owls playing poker on a table in the tavern area. They look like they have been playing cards all night long.

"Don't worry about them", said the parakeet, they are truly very harmless, but I wouldn't go in there right now, "Old, Bob there, is taking a beating all night long, and his temper is about ready to fly of the old chicken coop, if you know what I mean?"

Raven nodded, and decided to go out into the street instead to get some fresh morning air. There was a wagon selling fresh fruit. There was an item that looks like a cross between a strawberry, orange, and banana. There was a mole pushing the cart with an apron on. The mole was wearing sunglasses and had a long pink rose colored tail.

Why the glasses? said Raven. "Why the bad attitude", said the mole in reply. "Only a question", said Raven. "Only an answer then', reply the mole.

This is off to a good start, and she decided to change the subject. "I will take one of those", Raven pointed to one of the interesting fruit that was in the mole's cart. The mole without smiling took out a bag and using a fork like stick to put one of the fruit into the bag for her and gave it to Raven. Raven in return gave him a coin.

"Which way to the harbor and to pier nine?" she asked the mole. "Now I am a travel agent also?"

The mole used the fork like stick again, and pointed in the southeast direction without any emotion or feeling, and then gave out a sigh and started to push and roll the cart once more for his next delivery stop of the morning.

“Not much of talker, I see”, said Raven to herself. She ate the fruit while walking southeast and soon she could hear the beautiful sounds of the sea. She then got to the boardwalk that had a layer of golden sand on it. It was an incredible beautiful morning, but out in the distance she could see dark clouds that were forming, and could possibly bring future rain that were coming their way from out shore.

She was alone on the board walk, and didn't see any one else while she walked. Why wasn't there wasn't anyone else on the boardwalk? There were only a few small colorful sailboats tied to the pier with all of their masts tied in place.

She could see a few fishing boats that were already out to sea that were already trying to get their daily catch of the day.

Arriving at pier nine, there were no boats and it was boarded up for construction. “This is very odd,” said Raven as she started to hear thunder from out in the distance where the rain clouds where forming, and knew that the storm was starting to develop and was getting even closer than she thought of before.

She then saw the sheriff. He was in a patrol boat and came up beside the pier and tied his boat into place. To raven's surprise; the Sherriff was a huge woolly wolf Spider. The Sherriff had eight legs and eight eyes to match, and all of them were focus and were now staring right at Raven.

Good morning,” Miss, I appreciate you coming down to the pier this morning on such short notice.”

“The town folks normally don't take kindly to strangers and especially to one of your style or type. I have been told that you were special and needed to meet with you right away for your own protection if nothing else.”

“My own protection”, said Raven, “I am well capable and able to take care of myself thank you.”

At the same time she was making her reply back to the Sherriff, there was a big thunder clap, and Raven jumped back by reflex.

“Well, that may all good and true, but I can assure you that it is important and very necessary for you to be making the right friends and acquaintances in this rusty old town of ours.”

Raven was taken aback on how direct and forward the Sherriff was, and wasn't exactly what she was expecting in regards to having a power lunch with one of the town's important representative. While being so occupied, she didn't notice that once the Sherriff had arrived that the broach on her sweater actually became alive.

The ruby eyes became transparent and large fangs appeared. It then crawled undetected up to Raven's neck. It then sank its pure venom fangs into her beautiful moist neck like a vicious vampire bat.

Raven screamed, and swatted breaking the broach into pieces, as two streams of bloods flowed out of the pierce wounds that were left behind on her neck.

The venom worked rapidly which took hold of Raven immediately. Her hold body shook, and she couldn't focus her eyes on anything longer, everything was starting to spin, and her speech start to slur.

"My poor, poor child" "Are you having a bad morning" "You must understand you are just at the wrong place at the wrong time", said the Sherriff." "It is seems to me that you are very intoxicated, and so early in the morning."

Raven's body was becoming completely paralyzed, and was about to fall to the ground, but before she actually hit the ground; the Sherriff was there and was scooping her up like a bag of dry goods and placing her carefully into his patrol boat.

"Don't want to damage the goods now do we?" The sheriff at the same time took the bag of golden coins from out of her bag. The last thing Raven heard was the humming of the boat's motor as it left the broken down pier.

The sheriff had nothing good about him nor was any of his attentions for raven. Oh, he may be a charmer, and political as the best of them, but he knew and saw a golden opportunity when one was offered to him and this surely was one of them, pure gold.

Not only, did he have a full bag of gold in his possession, but now he was going to sell this featherless, furless creature for more gold. Boy, life is good, as he pulled the boat into the rocky cove where the transaction was to take place for the selling his new property. The rocks scrapped hard across the bow of the boat as he pulled up to the cave entrance.

"Can't be helped", said the Sheriff to himself.

"What can't be help", said a strange looking Pelican that came out of the shadows to greet the Sheriff.

"Well, there you are my kind feather friend, Right on time as we agreed upon yesterday. Looks like a storm is approaching fast, so no time for small talk"

"Do you have the gold for the purchase of this strange and beautiful creature?"

"Here you go, it's all there as we discussed", Sheriff, and the Pelican threw a bag of golden coins to him, in which the Sheriff caught in midair.

"Count if you may? The total price is all there on what we agreed upon."

"No need to count my boy, I already know that your work is golden", replied the Sherriff for if you can't be a bird of your own word then what can you be these days?

“I will now be happy to take her off your hairy hands”.

“Remember, the venom will keep her asleep for a day or so, after that she will be wide awake again and will be back to her old self good as brand new.”

“Don’t you worry, Sheriff, I will take care of her, and train her the proper manners of how to obey or else”

“Then our transaction is over and done with”, “It is always good to see you again my feather friend, and to do business with you as always”

“Likewise”, returned the Pelican. The Pelican reached down and carried Raven from out of the boat. The Pelican walked carefully upon the wet stone steps that lead out of the cove and unto the nearby road.

There was a long line of Cage’s being pulled by peacocks. The Titles on all of the cages were:

“The Simply Amazing Pelican International Circus of Stars”

Before Raven was put into one of the circus cages, The Pelican stripped Raven of all of her cloths. She was then roughly put her into one of the empty sawdust cages. He then locked the door and made sure the door was tightly shut.

“All right, Bird’s”, the pelican shouted, “Stop all of your staring, haven’t you never seen a naked ape before”, “we have a big top to get setup, and we need to get it set-up before night fall”.

The peacocks without a sign of hesitation started moving again and the cages started to roll behind each other towards the location of where the big top was going to be setup. The cages were all put into a circle, and the Big top tents were immediately rolled out and the bleachers were set-up for the ticket holders that will be coming to the shows.

“Looked like most of the storm went to the north of us”, said the Pelican to his crew. “This is a very good omen that we should have a nice night after all.”

The workers then raised colorful banners to the top of the big top tents. The colors were now raised and the Circus was officially open for business.

There was a type of excitement in the air that only the circus can bring into a small village town. Opening night was just in a couple of days, and now that we have a new main attraction, tickets should be selling like hot cakes as never before and we might be able to even raise the prices for admission.

The Pelican then went to his custom wagon to get some sleep as the busy day that he had already planned for the circus was already in his head for tomorrow.

Raven was still out cold, and only had a very small layer of hay to sleep on. The stars shined above the circus as night gave way to a brand new morning. The first thing that Raven heard was the crow of a Roaster somewhere within the circus compound.

All of the circus birds were already awake and were busy doing their circus chores for the day and getting ready for the big opening day.

Raven immediately got self-conscious when she notices that she wasn't wearing any cloths. She went to the corner of the cage and stayed rolled up in the fetal position.

She then saw the large lock hanging on the door and knew at once that she was being held captive against her will.

"How can she be treated like this? A captive, a cage animal in a freak Circus, I am an American girl after all."

She was completely dazed and started to cry due to the overwhelming emotions of being captive against her will.

A Peacock came by and slid a platter of morning seed to her under the cage door. "Pull, yourself together, my young chickadee" "Pelican is planning big things for you", "You better treat him well or he will make your life a living hell for you. You are his property now remember".

"Oh, So being stripped naked in a cage without my consent and locked up like a criminal without a jury trial of one's peers is being treated well?"

"Just wait one minute sugar plum; it could be a lot worst for you, you are not going to be put into the cockfight". "They normally use the male pigeons for that. They are all so expendable and plain. They first tie their legs together, and then it is battle to the death. They start bashing their heads in.

Normally, they try to take each other's eyes out first, so their opponent is blinded and becomes defenseless within the battle."

"The common ticket holder loves it of course, the more blood and gore, and terror that they can see the better" "Now, that's real entertainment."

"Don't you put one more ounce of any more fear into this poor ape creature", said another peacock that just came up to the cage to see what all of the commotion and conversation was about.

"Now eat up miss. It will be time for your training soon and you will need all the energy that you can mustard up for it."

There was the sound of a loud whip that cracked like lightning in the night, and the peacocks scattered to their own stables knowing that they had already spent way too much time with Raven, and they didn't want to be punished themselves. Another crack sounded and then staring into Raven's cage was the Pelican circus master himself.

“Good morning, to you” “I am so glad that you have decided to join the Circus after all with us fine folks.” His eyes stared cold at Raven’s naked body and Raven tried to cover up as well as she could.

“So I see you haven’t eaten your morning seeds yet.” Raven went to the dish and put some seeds into her mouth not wanting to displease the pelican in any manner.

“Here take this costume and put it on, that he just pulled out of his leather bag that he was carrying. It was a pink leotard that had sparkles with a very low cut in the back and front.

Raven felt sick but thought she had no choice in the matter, and put on the pink sparkled leotard that clung way to tightly to her body and cut uncomfortable into her breasts, and silently stared at Pelican with inner contempt.

“Now that wasn’t hard was it, my friend”. “You look like a star already” “I need to do some morning chores before your training, so go ahead and finish your plate of seeds, and I will be back to get you in a little bit.”

Raven took the plate and started to eat and pick at the seeds again.

“Now that is a good little ape”, the Pelican smiling at her as he moved on to other important circus issues on his already busy morning agenda. Raven finish the seeds and threw the plate outside of the cage that landed on its side and then spinner like a top before settling down into the dirt.

One of the Circus rats was pulling the empty breakfast plate cart, and picked up Raven’s plate with his tail and put it in the bin with the other plates to be wash. The rat tipped his hat to Raven and gave a smile. Ravens just looked back with empty emotion, and tried pulling at the iron bars of the cage to no success.

“Well, at least I am not a pigeon while thinking what the peacock said about cock fighting? “

“Excuse me” came from a tired voice from the other side of her cage. Raven looked at the cage next door to her, and there was a one eyed pigeon full of recent scars that was healing on its body.

Raven felt bad now knowing that the follow captive pigeon overheard what she just said.

“I meant no harm to you“

“No harm at all, sir”

“I appreciated that”, said the one eye pigeon back to her. “I know who and what I am, and where I am. A pigeon is what I am and that is what I am and what I will always be, dead or alive.” “You don’t have to say it, I know my destiny, my young stranger, and it is more likely toward the death side then the life side of the equation that I have been given before me.”

Raven looked away, and thought just by closing her eyes would solve the problem and have it go away, far, far away.

“This has to be some type of mistake. First of all, I don’t wear pink, and secondly I don’t do live circus performance.”

The two peacocks that Raven encountered earlier that gave him breakfast were back. “Circus training time” and they started to push her cage to the Big top area.

Once inside the main tent, there were three rings, and there were activity going on in each one. The far left one was a trapeze balancing artist, and the far right was some type of clown act that was being performed.

Raven’s cage was connected to the main cirde enclosure, and it look like some type of obstade course. There was another cage already attached that was next to her and she could hear a deep hissing sound.

The Pelican had arrived and had a whip in one hand and an electrical wand device in the other that look like a cattle prod. The pelican open up the cage and said, “Time to make your feed money honey”.

Raven looked hesitant, and slowly got out of the cage. Immediately she was picked up from behind and was thrown against the metal enclosure which had an electrical current going through it. She fell to her knees and then she felt a kick to her stomach. Her head started to spin.

“What type of mad circus is this”, she then was able to see who was doing this to her and it was a large badger with glaring red eyes and large black claws.

The Pelican cracked its whip, enough already,” remember this is training, same your energy for the course.”

“You are going to regret this day”, said the badger to Raven. Raven was still bent over trying to catch her breath. “To your positions” shouted Pelican. There were two squares that were lighted that were lite up. The badger took one square, and raven was told to stand on the other.

The course was all computerized and each station had a pass or failed mechanism to them. If you pass, you go to the next station, if you fail, pain would be immediately afflicted upon you. There was a scorecard clock in the middle of the ring itself that would monitor their progress.

The pelican blew a whistle, and the event began. The badger took little time to go to each station and made swift progress. Raven stumbled through each station and more and more pain was afflicted to her by failing each station.

Towards the end, she felt the Pelican putting the cattle prod to her back end, and said, “This is totally not acceptable. You are going to have to really step up your pace to be competitive with old badger here.”

The badger won, and was given a fresh fruit to eat. Raven cross the finishing line limping and barely alive.

“Back to your cages, you slackers”

Raven lifted herself back into the cage that was then was locked and was then rolled back to the staging area with the other circus animals. She just laid there in the fetal position feeling every pain that was afflicted to her.”

“Real cattle are treated better than what I just went through.” When feeding time came, the peacocks passed her by mocking her morning performance with the badger. “Poor little ape, old badger whipped your ass good today.”

Evening came and the lights went out. She could hear the other animals that were also in pain that were moaning, and knew that she wasn’t the only poor soul that they afflicted pain upon that day. At midnight, she notices that someone had just opened up her cage, and a wing went against her open mouth making sure she didn’t make a single sound. It was the one eye pigeon that was in the cage next to her earlier that morning.

“We are going to break free from this circus”; “You have to trust me totally”. “If you stay here, you going to end up like me with fewer and fewer body parts each day.”

“The most difficult part is going to be getting by those darn sleeping peacocks, but to our advantage they are deep sleepers. There is also just one Flamingo guarding the exit at this time of night.”

Raven nodded and decided she had to go with him that this might be her only chance to escape. They pass through the peacocks stalls without any difficulties. She then saw the flamingo guarding the exit.

The pigeon told Raven to close her eyes and to keep her head down. She didn’t see what happen next, but she could just image seeing the Pink flamingo blood had pooled up on the ground where the Flamingo used to be.

“Now, Jump on my back, we need to go to Pigeon town and keep out of sight from the authorities for a while, until we can figure out what our next plans are going to be.”

The Pigeon opened its wing and off in flight they went. The moon was low on the horizon and raven felt totally free again. She will never take her freedom for granted ever again as they sail into the night.

Pigeon Town:

When Raven arrived at Pigeon town, it made Las Vegas feel like a Quaker town. It was like a combination of Mardi gras and Carnival all combined in one. It was after mid night now, and it seemed like it was still high noon in the afternoon with how much light was shining from all of the activity that was going on. Music was being played at every street corner and there were half naked pigeons dancing in the street. There was also a one legged black bird that was playing a harmonica and banjo outside of a jazz bar.

The one eye Pigeon landed careful next to a club called "Alley Cat", and there was a large black and white cat, which was the bouncer checking pigeon id's as they went into the club. From the door way next to the entrance, the one eye pigeon said "Charlie", "remember me."

The black and white Cat stopped checking IDs and looked over to them. Charlie smiled immediately, "My God, It's been a long time, rumor had it, that you ran off with the circus and were lost for dead."

'I am not dead yet and I need your help' "I need to get in the back way into the club so no one can see me enter."

"Sure, my friends, throwing him the keys, but you owe me one." "Is cherry, working to night Charlie?"

"Yeah, she is on stage right now shaking her tail off as usual" "You know how popular she is with the midnight crowd and all"

"Hey, who is your new friend in pink next to you, Is she a new exotic dancer? I never seen a dancer that looks like her before" "She is definitely the cat's meow, you better not let Cherry see her, you know how jealous she gets."

"Yeah, I want Cherry to check her out, strictly business?" "New skin, especially new exotic skin, is what the customer wants these days" "Charlie was now licking its whiskers while looking at Raven."

Raven, looked at the one eye pigeon as her blood was starting to boil over, "Exotic dancer, really me?" "Just play along with me until we get inside and then we can talk more and plan your specific cover for you."

They went around the back of the Alley Cat past a smelling old dumpster that smelled like old tuna, and some miss placed oil drums.

The one eye pigeon used the key that Charlie gave him, and carefully opened the backroom door. He walked in with Raven coming from behind. The back room must be a back storage room with shelving and cases of used wine and beer bottles all stacked up. There was only one red light bulb that wasn't part of any fixture that was swinging back and forth in midair. The walls were thin, and Raven could hear the pulsating dance music coming from the main Alley Cat's room, and she also heard loud voices from another room that must be the costume staging areas for the dancers.

“You are safe here, don’t go and where, let me go and find Cherry. I will be right back.” There was a metal chair in the corner that Raven sat down to rest while the one eye pigeon looked for Cherry in the main room. The one eye pigeon walked into the other room and almost ran into one of the waitresses carrying a plate of beers.

“Hey, watch yourself, Mister” “Sorry, and pointed up to his only one good eye. “ The waitress wasn’t amused and pushed by already have been delayed in bringing a beer to an angry customer. There were three dancing stages in the Alley Cat and all were being occupied by slender curvy young pigeons with perfect skin. ‘If I have to die, this is where I want to die, and surely not in any three ring circus death match”

She spotted Cherry right away next to the bar, so she must have just finished her dance routine for the night. She was a small pigeon but had a very perky body and was one of the customer’s favorites. It’s not what you have, but how you sell it was her daily motto. Just work with it and shake your tail feathers with it baby, was one of her favorite sayings.

The one eye pigeon went and touched her on the shoulder. She turned and recognized him immediately and gave him a big huge emotional hug.

“My god, SAM, you are alive! I was told that they caught you and sold you to the circus for good”

“Well, don’t believe everything they tell you”.

“I need your help”, and quickly explain the entire situation that Raven was with him and was in the back storage room. “Go taker her to my dressing room and wait for me, I have to finish up my shift here, and I will be there shortly in about a half hour. She then went behind the bar, and opened up a beer and handed it to Sam.”

“This one is on me.” “Thanks”, said Sam, “we will be waiting and hope to see you as soon as we can.”

Sam made sure he stayed in the shadows as he worked his way back to the storage area. The place was packed with clients, and he knew the majority of the eyes were on the exotic dancers and not on him.

Raven found a rusty screw driver on the floor. This will be good as a weapon just in case. She heard the door open, and tucked it under the table next to her just in case.

“It’s only me” said Sam. Raven was very much relieved that it was just Sam.

“I talked to Cherry, and she said to wait for her in her dressing room. It’s upstairs.”

Sam took Raven to the stairs and made sure no one could see them. They moved swiftly up the stairs and entered her room just as two dancers came around the corner talking about their tips for the day.

“We made it”, said Sam.

Raven was too exhausted to talk anymore and every bone in her body was still hurting from the circus, and lay down on Cherry soft comfy sofa. She tried to stay awake, but just couldn't and fell into a deep sleep.

Sam took some time and looked around Cherry room. He was surprise to see a group picture with him and cherry from last Christmas celebration. There was a red heart drawn around him and Cherry. He always had feelings for Cherry, but didn't know if Cherry had any deep romantic feelings towards him.

The door then open, and Cherry walked in and immediately seductively took Sam into her warm embrace and gave him a long passionate kiss. Sam ran his hands through her hair feathers and down to the arch of her lower back.

Cherry looked at Sam as if he was the only person that could ever satisfy her needs or be with. They were so caught up in the passions of the moment that Sam all forgot about Raven, about the circus, and only had the burning lust desire to satisfy Cherry's physical and emotional needs.

Cherry then shoved Sam hard against the wall. "Don't you ever do that again", she said. "I was scared when you disappear like that without leaving anyone word or a note."

"I know you were cherry, but there wasn't any time when the circus folks kidnap me. I am back now and promise I will never leave your side again if that is what you want."

Cherry then put her hands to his face and kissed him again.

"I love you Sam, you know I do, I always have and always will." "Don't you leave me ever again?"

She then saw raven sleeping on her sofa.

"What in God's name is this poor child doing here?"

"We escape together from the circus". "They were torturing her and would have eventually killed her just like they would have killed and taken all of my body parts from me if I had stayed"

Cherry took a warm comfy blanket from her closet and put in over Raven still wearing her thin pink leotards.

"Well, she definitely not a Pigeon, Sam?" "She couldn't work in the club, she would bring on too much attention even being an exotic dancer, and I don't think she could even meet the age limit of a waitress with the limit of age eighteen and all.

"Let's go to the nightly diner down the street and get some coffee and just talk about it", and Sam kissed Cherry on the cheek as she quickly gathered up her purse and put on her street cloths and jacket.

Sam wrote a careful note for raven that they would be right back and not to panic, and left it next to Raven on the sofa.

Cherry and Sam locked the door behind them and went down the stairs and out the backdoor of the storage room where Sam and Raven first came in. Sam took Cherry's hand and they walked to the diner down the block. There was a slight mist in the air that made the streets light reflect rainbows onto the street. There were a few folks walking by, but none paid any attention to them as they looked like any other couple in pigeon town with only one exception and that maybe they looked even more in love.

Two love birds walking hand in hand.

"I really missed you Sam, and I am so sorry about your eye" "I am just so very thankful to be alive and to be able to walk next to you again" "You are the sweetest man", as she embraced him one more time and giving him another passionate kiss", as Sam opened up the door to the small town diner.

They took a booth table towards the back, and the room was filled with old movie stars photographs hanging on every wall. Each booth had an old fashion music box where you can pick a blast from the past.

The waitress arrived and handed them their menus and glasses of water. "Good morning, do you know what you will be having or do you want to take a minute looking at the menu first"

"I will take a cup of hazel coffee and also your two seed pancakes special."

"I will take the same", replied Cherry

"So what are we going to do with her, she can't stay in my dressing room for the rest of her life?" "I know, but I just couldn't leave her behind. The circus master was a crazy lunatic; I had no choice to bring her with me."

"I was thinking Cherry; I have that deserted farm that I inherited in the Northlands. I still have some money stashed away that we can live on for years. We don't need to live this life any more. I have seen what this City can do to one's soul and what it has already done to us. We need to have a new fresh start, a new beginning, you and me."

"Are you proposing to me, Sam" "If so, where is the ring" "I may be a dancer, but I am sure not a cheap one."

"Well, I guess I am Cherry? Let's get away, and go as far away as we can from both of our past, and start again with new beginnings."

"We can have as many eggs and baby hatchlings as your heart desire." "You can also pick out the specific ring that your heart desires."

"Yes, yes, Sam, Yes, let's run away as crazy lovers often do and never look back, let's never look back to the past ever again." She reached across the table and they passionately kissed each other.

"Hate to break up you two love birds, but your breakfast is ready", and she laid the coffee and breakfast in front of them to eat. Sam started to eat his breakfast and simply stared at Cherry.

He had never seen Cherry glow as much as he had this morning. They finished their meals and they decided to walk around the park and watch the sunrise. "Don't worry Sam, no one is going to see us, we will just be another two pigeons madly in love out on a very romantic morning stroll."

When they got back to Cherry dressing room, Raven was still asleep. Sam shook her shoulder softly and then a little bit harder before Raven woke up and sat up while covering herself up with the blanket.

Cherry smiled. "We are not going to harm you child". She went into her closet and pulled out a little black dress that should fit raven. "Here try this small outfit on, you are about my size".

Raven turned around now with her back facing them, and slipped off the pink leotard and put on the black dress instead. It wasn't a perfect fit but it was good enough.

"There you should now feel a whole lot better than having that dreadful pink circus costume on.

"So what is your name child" "its raven". "Well, Raven, Sam and I have made a decision".

"We are taking off to a farmhouse up in the north country to get away from all of the hard elements here in the city." "This place is no place for a girl of your age or really of any age, you can either come along or stay with us for a while until you figure things out or you can venture off on your own."

Raven looked at Sam for some type of mutual agreement, and he nodded his head asking her to come along too. "I will come to the farm with both of you" "Agreed then, I am glad we go that decision taken care of."

"We will go first thing tonight, seeing that you aren't a pigeon and all, you would make quite a commotion if we parade you down the city streets in broad morning daylight, that is what got you in trouble in the first place".

"Sam, I am going to take my normal afternoon dancing shifts, we can then sneak away right afterwards. We have to keep everything the same today in my routine, so we don't bring unnecessary attention to ourselves."

"Sam gave Cherry a hug", and then said, "I need to get some sleep myself."

He sat in the large chair in the corner and then thought that this was the first time in a very long time that he was so optimistic about his future and what tomorrow was going to offer him.

"Raven, stay here with Sam, and I will get you something to eat for breakfast from downstairs, and will be right back."

It didn't take long at all, and soon Cherry was back with a plate full of seed pancakes with maple syrup and cut slices of apples. "Now, here you go, you look like you are starving child"

Raven took the plate and started to eat. Raven noticed, star tattoos on Cherry's back that cascaded like a waterfall. "Where the Tattoos painful" "No not really, now don't you think of getting any yourself, young girl. You are way too young"

"The club doesn't like Tattoos so they make me cover them up half the time.

Raven tried to change the subject, "So what is it like to be an exotic dancer" "It's hard work and you really work you tail off" "Most men that come in, are just trying to get away from all of their problems for a few hours and have a bit of fantasy"

"Life is tough out here in Pigeon town, and I don't take away any men's right to have some harmless fun so to get away from their troubles and reality for a while"

"Talking about dancing, I have to get ready for my work shift. Now remember, right after my afternoon shift, we are going to be taking off for the farm, so make sure you and Sam are both ready."

"Thank you for the dress again, Pink really isn't my color". Cherry smiled and thought raven reminded her of herself some years ago as a teenager, but without the feathers of course.

"Now I have to go, and I am going to lock the door again. Do not answer the door, unless it's me." Cherry took some of her dancing cloths from the closet and went out the door down to the club floor.

During this time, Sam was still fast asleep and even snored a few times.

Raven, took her plates to the bathroom sink and washed them. She looked in the mirror and her scar on her head was mostly healed now and saw that was even some of the hair had started to grow back.

"Those lousy adolescent black crows, if I ever see them again, they are going to be so sorry for what they did to me."

Cherry slipped down the stairs and Charlie, the black and white cat, was at the Bar doing the prep work and getting ready for the day's activity. Charlie looked at Cherry who seemed way too occupied this morning without having something on her mind that was bothering her.

"Are you ok, Cherry" "Oh Hi Charlie, oh me, sure I am fine, just fine" "Did you talk to Sam last night, he was looking for you and it seemed to be very important that he talked to you", as he took one of the beer mugs and started to dry the water spots that had formed inside.

"Sam, yeah, good all Sam, He left last night, but we had a good talk"

"Is there anything you would like to share with me, as he lifted one eye brow?"

Cherry started to laugh. "You are the last crazy stray cat I would talk to about Sam. I do have an important favor to ask you. I am going away for a while and would like you to look over the club for away". "No problem Cherry, this is one alley cat that always has your back". "You can always count on that, and take it to the bank."

The door's open up at 11:00 am, and a few of the local old timers had already started to come inside. Charlie fills in for both bartender and DJ in the afternoons. There were just three girls in the afternoon, and they all start their dancing routines. Cherry was still considered the sexiest dancer of the three, and always had plenty of attention given to her.

They were playing the latest single from the go-go penguins, when Charlie stopped the music. There was a police car with its sirens on that had just stopped in front of the Alley cat dance club.

The sheriff threw open the doors to the club with all of his eight eyes were staring right at Cherry.

While showing his badge from his wallet, he started to ask official questions.

"So where is he, Cherry?" "I know that he would come to you first when he escaped from the circus, and did you know he even killed one of my flamingo security deputies.

Does everyone see this while holding a rolled up paper into the air. This is an official arrest warrant for Sam. It is a warrant for first degree murder of my flamingo, and we also have a cash reward of ten thousand dollar seed bounty award for any information to his arrest, dead or alive."

Charlie looked at cherry, "now that is money that would definitely get anybody's attention."

"Unfortunately, I don't know what you are talking about Sheriff; I haven't seen him for over a year.

"The last that I heard was he was kidnap by the circus."

"Is that true Charlie?"

"That is the honest truth Sheriff and that bad smell is just what I had to get rid of from my litter box this morning, when I just saw you coming through that door."

"Smell, or no Smell, you darn cat, now I am taking you all downtown for questioning and this club is officially closed until further notice."

"Now you please wait one minute right here and now for one moment Sheriff; you can't just walk right in here thru these doors and just close us down with no questions asked."

"Oh, yes I can, and I don't know why I have waited so long to do it. You do know pigeon girl that holding back information on a murderer is a capital offense all by itself in here old Pigeon town."

"Just keep you tight panties on Sheriff, I will go with you, but first, I have to go upstairs to my dressing room, and change into my street cloths. I have a reputation to keep up in this town of yours, don't you know."

"Not much of a reputation that I know of, Cherry" replied the Sherriff.

"I will give you ten minutes and not a minute more to gather up your things and then I am going to drag you with all of your pretty feather friends' downtown for an in-depth professional interrogation."

Cherry was almost in tears while walking to the stairs and she knew that good old Charlie would buy her some additional time by keeping old spider legs busy downstairs. She knocked softly on the door, "It's me Raven open up."

Raven open the door and Cherry ran to Sam and almost knocking the chair that he was sleeping on over. "Wake up Sam, Please wake up. The Sheriff is downstairs, and he is looking for you and is going to hang you for murder if he catches you."

"In my closet there is a hidden door that leads to a tunnel that has been used in the past for drug smuggling." "Raven take this bag", as Cherry stuffed some clothing into it. She then took another bag, and put some items in for herself. She had a small safe with some emergency cash underneath the bed. She took all of the cash out of the tin safe, and then looked at Sam with a real sense of urgency.

"Come on, Sam, Raven, let's go"

Cherry then opened the trapped door to the hidden tunnel and they all squeeze through the small opening. Sam went through last and made sure the door was shut tightly behind to make sure it wouldn't be easy to find. Cherry had a small flashlight that helped and they had to crawl on their feet through most of the tunnel. The tunnel then opened up to a large area, and there was a table with two large pink Rats drinking some whiskey from a glass jar.

One of the rats pulled out his gun and pointed at them, "who goes there", and then pointed at Cherry directly who was the first to arrive through the large opening.

"Come on put down you guns, Relax already, It's just me" Cherry was happy that the rats seem to be relieved it was just her. The rat placed his armed gun on the table, and said, "Alright pass by, but make it quick, this isn't no darn resort girlfriend, and then continued on within a low private tone conversation with the other rat at the table.

Raven, looked at the rats as she passed by. "What are you looking at sunshine" as the rat glare at Raven and place his hand back onto his gun and clicked the safety off."

"Do you want a piece of my gun?"

"Nothing sir, excuse me, why nothing at all", replied Raven

"As it should be, now get your dirty ugly mug out of my pirate tunnel or else."

"Believe it or not, raven, those two are the nicer of the rats that you will ever find around these parts; we got very lucky, very lucky indeed."

Just to be on the safe side, they put some distance between them and the rats as quick as they could, and then they had to take a short rest. Everybody was taking deep breaths just to get reenergized. It was as if the wind itself had been taken right out of them

Suddenly, Raven notice eight eyes staring at her from the corner, She scream, “the sheriff”, and out flew four bats. Sam couldn’t stop laughing.” Funny, just real funny”, “Look over here over there, Sheriff, Sheriff”

“Enough Sam already, we got the joke ok, we should be going again or the real sheriff will be staring at us next time and it will be now joking matter”. Sam wasn’t ready to calm down yet, and made a few more funny looks at Raven and couldn’t stop laughing. He finally got a hold of himself.

Cherry stared at him with her arms cross, “Really Sam, I think you have had enough fun at Raven’s expense.”

They pasted by a small room that on the walls were filled with glittering diamonds of every type and color. Raven couldn’t believe it and shoved some into her bag. “Girl, what are you doing? These are just common stones, there worthless pieces of glasses you can find everywhere down her.”

“Where I come from they are worth a lot of money”

“Really, man your place must be really mess up chasing after piece of broken glitter glass. That’s what we call it, glitter glass, and it is completely worthless so don’t weigh yourself down with it.”

They came to the end of the tunnel. The steps were made out of human skulls. Sam said, “Let me go out first and then I will wave you both up”. “It’s clear, come on up”. Raven hesitated for not wanting to step on the skulls. Sam frowned, “Come on, you are wasting time. They are not going to harm you, they are already dead.”

Soon, they were all standing together at a remote location on the edge of pigeon town. The sun was now low on the horizon. It’s time to say goodbye to old pigeon town for good. ‘It’s been a good ride, overall Sam, hasn’t it been.” “The very best, girlfriend, the very best indeed” replied Sam.

The Farm:

“Be careful now, and jump on my back for its time to fly”, Sam told Raven. We will fly through the cloud bank and head north to the farm by night. We can hide out there for a while. Off they went the three of them, it was as Sam expected as it was thick as pea soup, but Sam had good radar and was on track to the farm house as they put more and more distance miles between themselves and good old pigeon town.

They flew through a hidden valley and up a steep mountain path. The farm house was in a very isolated area, and has been boarded up for years. It was too dark to go inside and do any nesting as Cherry puts it, so they decided to stay in the barn stalls for the night and then they could see what the condition the house was in the morning light.

There was warm hay still in the stable that made for some nice bedding. “Well, let’s all get some sleep. We will all feel better in the morning.”

Raven picked a stable that seemed fresh enough, but just in case put some new hay down for bedding. In the morning, she would need to think of what would be in her self-interest, and knowing the pigeons were doing the best they can. Could she still trust them? Should she stay or would they and she be better off if she left on her own.

It was only a few hours into the night, when her stable door open.

“So there is where you are”, “I have been looking all over this darn farm for you young lady”.

Raven had to blink the sleepiness out of her eyes first, and standing in front of her was a man made out of hay but was in total flames.

“Greetings, I am the Burning Man, and it is time for us to go”

“Go where? Said Raven.

Well to your transformation celebration of course.”

Please, look at your arms dear. Raven looked at her arms and she saw tiny flames starting to appear and she started to feel a strange tingle feeling throughout her body.

“See, it has already beginning within you, we must be going or you are going to be late for your own party. Don’t worry, your friends, the Pigeons will all be safe. At least for now, Can’t say about the future. That is always a funny thing about the future, don’t you think. I do know one thing that is always strange about the future; it is always so very unpredictable. Don’t you agree my dear child?”

Raven stood up and walked out of the barn with the burning man, and it was like walking into what Woodstock must have been like while on LSD.

All of her senses were heighten and she felt like her entire brain was on fire and was about to exploded. It was night but it was as if there was an inner light that awoke a new sensation within her. There were naked people all around dancing, jumping, and embracing each other, and there was a band playing loud alternative music.

One girl stopped and hugged Raven, "Welcome, and peace to you always" and put a white flower into her hair. She was about to thank the girl, and the girl turned into a beautiful unicorn before her eyes.

The burning man lifted Raven up by the waist and onto the unicorn. He then led Raven and the unicorn through the festival. There were tall juggler's walking on stilts, and a few flame throwing acts. There were also slim lizards in tuxedo jackets walking with plates of cheese and drinks for all to drink. Everything was so very colorful and was vibrating to the beat of the drums and music.

They then got to the middle of the festival grounds, and there was a mound built out of straw surrounded by torches. The unicorn turned into a dark creature with claws, and the burning man looked at Raven. "It's time now" It is time for your transformation. The dark creature held her, while the burning man tied her hands in back of her. They made sure that both of her hands and feet were securely tied together"

They then lifted her up and onto mound, Raven started to panic, "this is totally nuts."

"Are you people out of your freaking mind"

"Don't worry. Everything will be alright. She then she saw eight skeletons, appearing holding jars with their own human hearts beating inside."

The burning man started the ceremony and bowed dramatically to the crowd that was gathering around them.

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered here together, for the transformation of this lovely girl, Raven. Each of you has your heart with you, so your heart can be one with hers in total bliss and joy."

Raven first heard each heart beating separately, but then she started to hear them together and they started to arouse her own heartbeat. The beating increased and it was as if her entire body had become on fire. She looked at her arms and they were now totally in flames as was her total body. The altar was now totally engulfed in the eternal flame.

Her hips started to rock to the beating of each heart and she was washed over and over with an intensity of being totally alive. Soon, it seemed like she had no longer any control over her body. She couldn't take the intensity any longer and out into the night she release a scream of true hidden desire as her body went completely limp.

She then saw herself in a vineyard wearing a white blue gown and a yellow apron. She heard someone say, pick just eight more grapes and you can go home. She picked seven, but when she tried picking the eighth grape it simply turned into wine and out through her fingers onto the grass covered earth.

The sound of a Rooster echoed through the barn from outside, Raven eyes opened up from a very deep sleep, and she saw at once that she was back in the stable looking at Sam and Cherry as they slowly came out of their stables. Sam was yawning and stretching his arms above his head.

“Good Morning” Did you have any interesting dreams? “I thought that I heard you moaning last night, you must have had a really good one.”

Raven, blush, “can’t say that I did” “At least we all got some good sleep, before that darn rooster woke us up”, trying to change the subject of the conversation.

“Now that it is morning, let’s go check out the farm house.” They all walked out of the barn and they were met with the intense smell of a fresh country morning air. “So this is what clean air is supposed to feel like.” “I believe that this is just what the doctor has indeed ordered for all of us” said Sam.

“While you check out the house, Cherry, I am going to take Raven down to the pond where there are root vegetables and berries to pick for our morning breakfast meal. We shouldn’t be too long.”

Sam saw an empty wheel barrel next to an old broken down tractor, and said follow me to raven as he started to push the barrel down the path to the edge of the pond. It was a medium size pond and it was fed by a clear spring with a stream that also came down from the upper mountain path.

Even so, Raven was still surprise on how much pollution was actually was in the water, and the amount of garbage that was floating on the pond itself.

Sam saw Raven’s concern.” I know exactly what you are thinking; things were different when we first came to the farm. There was no garbage and no pollution to be concern about at all. It seemed that with the recent constant development of new farms and industry that more population have been created and have gotten into our rivers and ponds. Pollution is just not acceptable, not with all that we know now and how it affects all creatures within the web of life.

“You can say that again, and then Sam and Raven smelled it at the same time” Raven has smelled weed before but never so strong. All this time there was a large toad smoking pot on a lily pad staring at them both.

“If you want my honest opinion’ “It’s all you dam pigeons that are causing all of the environmental problems and concerns, with your breeding habits that have created over population, and your total attitude of total neglect of the environment.” “All, Very hedonistic if you ask me, as the toad took another drag on its joint”

“I just can’t believe it, Why Toad, is that you”

“The one and only, I got my medical marijuana card just last week, due to my intense wart condition and all. Precancerous you know?”

“So are you moving back to the old farm house? “

“That’s the plan”, stated Sam. “Well it will be nice to have you as neighbors again and having you back home, reply Toad. Raven started to think about home herself, and couldn’t stop from getting emotional again herself.

She sat down and put her head in her hands and just started crying uncontrollably.

“What’s wrong with her”, as Toad took a sincere look of concern, and by the way what type of bird is she?” “Sam don’t worry about me, I am totally all into diversity if you know what I mean.”

“Don’t bother with me”; said Raven. “I am just sad that I am not home.”

Sam looked at Toad. “She isn’t from around these parts?” “She is just a little bit homesick”

Toad smiled, “Well, tell me the obvious now”

Raven just nodded as she blew her nose and wiped the tears from her eyes.

Well, you know who has all the answers and believe it or not he is still alive.

“Old Puff, the crazy dragon himself”

“Believe it or not, that old Shaman is still doing his special therapy sessions”.

“He doesn’t come off down from the mountain very often though, maybe twice a year to get supplies now and then.”

“So, how do I get to see this Old Puff, seeing that he has all of the answers? ask Raven while still clearing the rest of the tears from her eyes,”

Toad laughed, “Well, by special dragonfly of course.” “Sam, you really got one brand new greenback on your hand’s don’t you, you just don’t know nothing do you kid, but if there is any anyone that can give you specific directions for your life, it would be good Old Puff.” “Unless, he is in the middle of his bagel and cream cheese breakfast, then you might as well forget about it.”

Toad then drifted away on the lily pad as he finished his morning smoke and told them it was time for his daily beauty mud bath. Sam and Raven was then left alone while picking some berries off the bushes by the pond for breakfast, and also digging up some root vegetables that they had also found.

Raven then look at Sam, “So is that Toad right?” “Should I should go and meet this Puff dragon and get some of my questions answered. “

“I can’t make that decision for you, raven, but I have met Puff only once before, many years ago and he said to me that I was going to come back with a bride wanting to raise a family on the farm. When he told me that, I just laughed, that would be the last thing I would want to do or had on my mind back then.”

Raven felt a strong breeze from behind her. She turned and was staring into the purple eyes of a very large beautiful green blue and yellow dragonfly. "So it looks like your question has just been answered"

"Sam, are you going to come with me?"

"Raven, I can't, I have to stay and take care of Cherry. "

"If you want my opinion, you should on go and meet Old Puff, nothing venture nothing gain, just keep your mind open and get all your questions written down in your mind before you meet him."

Raven gave Sam a Hug. "Say goodbye to Cherry for me, hope to see you two again shortly" She jumped onto the wings of the dragonfly and off they went toward the top of the mountain. I can't believe that I am riding a dragonfly and will be seeing and talking to a real life dragon.

It was the only dragonfly that she could see flying, and they took the back roads to make sure that they didn't draw too much attention.

The wings of dragonfly made a soft humming noise that was very smoothing to raven. The humming noise sounded like the soft purring of a cat sleeping on a sunny window frame. If cats could only fly she thought to herself. But who knows, Raven thought. It seemed that all things were possible in this curious world that she was now experiencing.

The dragonfly dropped her at the entrances of Old Puff cave. There were strings of white and blue lights on the outside of the cave with Hanukah Candelabra burning with candle and incense.

"This is not what I expected at all." There was a welcome sign that stated meetings only by appointments. She didn't have an appointment so she just stood at the entrance wondering if she should just go in or not.

Out of the entrance Old Puff head appeared with a black yamaka and a rabbi stroll. "Child what are you waiting for? A formal invitation?" "Please do come in. You look so alone and surprise, haven't you ever seen a dragon before wearing a black yamaka before."

"Don't you worry so much; Toad called me and told me that you were coming. Toad has a good heart, but I am so concern about his warts, but no one is perfect are they? We just do the very best that we can each day and let life take care of all of the rest".

"Please, please do come on in"

Raven walked in and there was an oriental rug and two chairs with a silver tray full of bagels, cream cheese, and warm glass of milk. "You must be hungry. Please take a bagel or two; we need to add some extra meat to your bones. You look so thin." "My favorite ones are the cranberry apple"

Raven sat down in the chair across from Old Puff and took a warm bagel from the silver plate and a glass of warm milk.

"There you go, see are already looking better than before you walked in, and we haven't even had our heart to heart talk yet." "So now tell me your name, Child." She said, "Raven".

Old Puff wasn't going to have any of this. "No please tell me your real name"

"Rebecca Ann Swartz" "Swartz well now we are getting somewhere, you are not related to the Swartz's on hummingbird lane that comes to my synod every Saturday are you? Raven was going to answered no, but she was starting to like old puff, so she said maybe a distance relative?"

"They are such very kind people, salt of the earth types that you truly don't see every day; those Swartz's are a blessing I tell you, a true blessing." "I just can't tell you enough about them."

"So now tell me dear child why do you come here seeking my advice. A girl as lovely as you, you should be visiting a young boy, not an old mystic dragon like me."

"It's boyfriend trouble? You are not pregnant are you? Of course you're not, you are good girl, I can tell by your kind smile, and eyes. See your eyes and smile are the gateway to heaven itself, they tell everything about you whether you want them to or not."

"I shouldn't be here" spoke Raven; I shouldn't be talking to a Rabbi Dragon. Where I come from there are no talking toads, birds, or even dragons. Please help me, I just need to know why all these strange things are happening to me, and when will I be able to be back living my normal teenage life."

"Well, the first think that comes to me is no teenage life is normal" "You know hormones and all the drama that goes with it."

The rabbi then looked very peacefully at Raven.

"I understand perfectly, but you must listen now for you must understand that it isn't important where you are but it is all about your sacred actions that you enact at every present moment of your life, that will bring out your true goodness of God and spirit that has always been within you.

I know that I don't fit the image of a normal rabbi that you may have been expecting, but I can tell you I went to the very best university and schools. I have memorized the sacred Tora from front cover to back."

"We must now proceed carefully, I have put some herbs together that should help with your nerves. I was young once myself, and in today's world things are not getting any easier for the next generation but just the opposite."

While talking to Raven, the dragon went into a trace like state. His eyes rolled back and started to shake while some type of white foam started to appear around the lips of his mouth. Raven thought that the old dragon was having some type of medical dragon seizure.

She started to look around and see if there was some type of telephone that she should dial 911.

A small mouse jumped up on the dragon's knee, and told Raven not to be alarm that the Dragon goes into these trances all the time when giving therapy, and normally it happens when there is an important message to give to his client when he does.

The Dragon started to speak, but it wasn't his voice any longer, but was the voice of Raven's Grandmother, Rebecca.

"Dear it is me, it's Grandma." "It's really me, and it is so nice to see you again my beloved child."

"Don't be alarm, I need to talk to you through Old Puff here, and we don't have a lot of time. Your mother and Father are very concern about you. They found you in your bathroom, and they called the paramedic's to help you. When they arrived, they tried to bring you too, but you were out cold. They then took you by ambulance to the intensive care at the hospital. They admitted you immediately, and they stated that you caught a rare case of Bird Flu.

Please don't laugh. This is serious. All I can tell you is that you have to hang in there; the doctors are trying their bests to take care of you. There is Karma at work here Honey which is much bigger than just you and I, and you need to go through this so you can move on from your previous life.

You were a holocaust victim in Germany and the pain and suffering that you are going through now is to enable you to retrieve your power back and to enable you to become the person that you need to be. Don't ever take your personal power for granted, and never let anyone take away any piece of your being ever again.

I have to go now; they told me that my time is up, but have just been told that I will see you again. Please take care and you are so very special and my love is with you always "

Old Puff awoke from his trance with a jolt. "Well, that was interesting. I apologize, did I say anything that might has alarmed or disturbed you."

Raven was still trying to process everything. Bird Flu really? A holocaust victim in Germany really? A medium trance through Old Puff, I just need time to process all of this.

"This normally doesn't happen not so automatically," said Old Puff. "Normally, when this happened the message really needs to get through." "I am so glad that it was your grandmother that came through" "Now, Here are some more special Herbs. He gave the package to Raven, and gave her a hug.

Raven said thank you, and went out of the cave still trying to process everything that she had just experience. The little mouse from the cave followed her. "You are so special girl; Old Puff hasn't gone into one of his medium trances in years."

Bird Flu? Raven said to herself again. "I can't believe it" The dragonfly was still there waiting patiently for her return as her taxi flight back to the farm. She jumped back on its back and they started back down the mountain to the farm. She was comforted again by the purring that the dragon fly made.

When they reached the farm house it was late afternoon, no one was there, but there were massive feathers scattered everywhere. Raven didn't know what to do, so she went to the pond to find out if Toad was there. Toad was on the edge of the pond and was extremely pale looking.

"What happen Toad" "Please tell me, what happen, I have to know?"

"The hawks, It was the hawks", Raven. Toad was breaking down with tears running down his warts as he was trying to explain what happen to her. "It was fast, it was fast, and I am sure they didn't feel a thing. It was painless it must have been painless."

It still wasn't making total sense to her, so she trying to calm and slow down a bit.

"Toad, are you saying that Hawks came down from the sky and took Sam and Cherry's lives."

"I know I am sounding like a crazy reptilian, but I saw them this afternoon just circling first in the lower levels of the sky, and then Cherry came out of the farm house not knowing they were there above them. I tried to warn her, but they swooped down so fast with so much speed and then Sam. Brave, kind Sam; well, Sam could see what was happening and he tried to save Cherry, and then the second hawk appeared from his blind side and took him out permanently. I barely got back to the pond safely myself. I am so sorry. I know you were a very good friend to both of them.

Dead, both of them Dead; I just saw both of them this morning. Raven fell on her knees in intense grief and pain. She held her stomach as if she was going to throw-up.

Raven couldn't believe what just happen, she was in completely shock, and then thought of what Old Puff stated in his trance about being a holocaust victim in a past life. Maybe this grieving is connected somehow in some way to her past lives. Tears started to roll down her face like a national park waterfall, and Toad gave her a handkerchief to blow her nose.

"I am so sorry I had to give you the news. Life is so unfair, so very unyielding and sometimes just being at the wrong place at the wrong time is just that. It was just their time."

Her whole body was shaking; Raven got up and while barely holding herself together started back to the farmhouse. When she entered the table was set for three and there was fresh made bread and a pot of soup on the stove. She went and turned the stove off. Took a bowl from the counter and pour some soup and sat down on the table and dipped her bread into the soup. She felt completely numb.

Even after their deaths, Cherry and Sam were still helping her by making the soup and bread that morning. She ate her soup alone and reflected on the past days of being with Cherry and Sam. She then felt tiredness throughout her bones and decided just to lie down on the couch in the living room to get some much needed rest and sleep.

The light outside the farmhouse was starting to fade and she heard the sound of crickets as evening came upon her in body and soul. She knew that she would never forget the kindness that was given to her by Sam and Cherry, and that if there is a Bird heaven, that now there were two more new love birds in eternity holding each other wings forever and ever more. They were meant to be together, and should never be apart from one another.

Raven closed her eyes. I don't what to continue to going through this pain, this suffering. All I want is to be home again. The little mouse had followed her down from Old Puff's cave, and came in from a small hole in the wall. It jumped up on the couch and crawled up next to her and tried to comfort her. Raven saw the mouse and patted its head. "Be a nice mouse now," and Raven slowly fell into a deep peaceful sleep. The mouse felt Raven's pain so intensely that he wrapped his own tail around himself for comfort, but knew that tomorrow would be a better day for her.

Morning came, and there was an awful sucking noise that came from the outside. The house was in complete darkness, but Raven knew that there should be some sunlight coming through the windows by now, but there wasn't any light at all. She got a candle and quickly took a match to get some light on this given perspective. The mouse was setting on the couch looking at her twitching its nose that had a small itch on it.

"Do you know what is going on, my small fury friend, if so, spill the beans now."

"Well, it must be the cleanup Snails. The Snails are like the street cleaner's and they are as high as skyscrapers and they come and suck up all of the pollution and garbage from the night before. Just give them a half of an hour or so and they will be moving on. Don't want to go outside while they are here though, their sucking power has acid that helps take all of the sticky matter up."

Mouse was right and in about forty minutes, sunlight was starting to shine slowly through the draperies of the house. "See everything is bright and clean again"" So do you mind if you go in the refrigerator there and get me a piece of chipotle cheese for me. It's my favorite, and my tiny stomach is starting to growl a bit."

Ravens blew out the candle and went to the refrigerator, and took out a block of cheese and slice a couple of pieces for old mouse. "Boy, this is good cheese" "You should have a piece" Raven sliced a piece for her and also bit into an apple that was on the kitchen counter.

"Are you feeling any better", said the mouse to Raven.

"You had me worry last night with all of the intense grieving and so." "I know the death of Sam and Cherry were so difficult for you, but you need to understand that the Hawk's didn't do it for any personal agenda; they were just looking for their next meal. That is what they were all about, just genetic DNA chemistry that is what it was, pure and pure genetics.

Cat and Mouse:

“So where are you headed next?”

“I don’t know” “I can’t just sit here on the farm and grow old can I? I need to keep going and keep on seeking my way back home, if there is a way home again, I will find it. Maybe not today, nor tomorrow, but I have faith that I will get back home. The sooner the better is my motto.”

“Do you want me to come along with you? I haven’t been on a fine exciting adventure for years. Old puff is set in his ways and doesn’t get out of his cave very much any longer. So this will be a real good treat for me to stretch my legs that if you want me to tag along with you and keep you company?”

Raven thought for a bit and said; “Well, why not” You never know when having a mouse in your pocket will help give you the edge in a given situation.”

Raven packed up some necessary supplies, and then told the mouse to jump into her left sweater pocket and off they went out onto the porch of the farm house. All of the feather and blood was cleaned up by the snails. She stopped for a second and got down on her knees again. This time, she gave a small prayer for both Cherry and Sam. “Thank you again Sam and Cherry” for all of your kindness and help.”

They were then off together into the breaking of a new morning to see what may come their way or not.

“I can’t believe I am off on an incredible journey” said mouse. Raven just laughed and started down the country road. She stopped at a shed that had a sheepskin jacket hanging on an old shovel.

“If we are heading north, this jacket may be handy.” She looked inside the shed and there was an old carriage frame, and some wagon wheels. She didn’t see anything else useful, so off they said a final goodbye and of they went again heading north on the old North Country road together.

Standing in their way were a few large sun flowers that were throwing seeds at each other across the road. Mouse caught one of the seeds and said breakfast time. He then nibbles on one. This just made the sunflowers even angrier and they started to throw more and more seeds and soon they were standing waist deep in seeds as they gathered together as a thick cover on the road like snow.

“Quick said the mouse, fill your pockets with as many seeds as you can. This can be our nourishment for some of the trip.” Ravens agreed and filled up her jacket pockets with seeds and then they continue on, while listening to the sunflowers that were still having major issues with each other and were hissing like snakes to each other.

“What was that all about”, said Raven to mouse. “Well you know how it goes in any situation, my side of the road is better than your side.”

“You see at one time they were all on the same side of the road, so they were just one happy sunflower family. Their family grew as sunflower families do of course over time, and spread across to the other side of the road. Once the road separated them, pride and vanity set in, the family that was on the west side believes they are much better than the family on the east side. They then started to get into these long philosophical arguments. They were getting each other so upset that they start sheading their seeds and then start throwing them at each other as you just saw for yourself in person.”

“I understand”, said raven, “families can be like that, especially if they are separated from one another. Do you think we should try and dig up the sunflowers and replant them together? In that way, they could all be back together again. I wouldn’t try that, too much time has passed and the winds will just blow their seeds to the other side again. They just need to understand their true nature is the same as the other regardless of which side of the road they are on. Put I do agree with your raven that it is a sad situation by all means, but in a way it might be good for them to experience different soil and to push themselves in different directions. We can’t be all alike can we, or else who would do the variety of needs that are necessary out there to have a beautiful and diverse garden.”

“Mouse, I see a little bit of Old Puff coming through you, you may have spent way too much of time around him.”

“You are not going to go into a trance are you?”

“If you don’t mind let’s keep on walking as they continue north.”

They came upon a very interesting village. The mouse seems to panic for some unknown reason. The mouse said, “Hide me, quickly, and don’t say anything about me until we are well past this village”.

Raven thought mouse’s request to be a very strange one, until she passed by the first house.

It was a nice well taken care of house with rose plants by the porch with white picket fence. There was a cloth line with freshly washed cloths being dried by the wind on the side. There was a small garden that looked like catnip was growing and also there was a string of ball that looked like a soccer ball that just bounced in front of raven that came from the field from behind the house.

Two kittens came around the corner, the one saying, “you kick the ball out of the field, so it must be considered a penalty. It wasn’t me, it was your cousin”, as a third kitten rounded the corner.

The three of them all stopped at the same time in their paw prints, and stared at Raven.

“Please don’t let me stop the game”, said raven. She even picked up the ball and threw it over their heads towards the empty field that they were playing on. Two of the kittens went chasing after the ball not having a second thought eager to continue their game; the third one came closer to raven with his tail up and the fur on his back rose.

"I smell a fragrance of something very wonderful that is coming from under your jacket."

Raven took the bait and opened up her jacket, see there is nothing here, as mouse scrambled to the back of her jacket and neck to make sure it wouldn't be seen.

The kitten circled Raven as if on a hunt, "it must be the smell from Pigeon town then. Those birds are very tempting indeed."

The kitten then started coughing, first with a small cough. It then grew larger and he then bent over like he was going to throw up right on raven. At the last minute, the kitten then turns and out came a hair ball with the skeleton of a mouse.

"Hair balls" "Excuse me miss" "Sorry you had to see that, but you can't stop it once it starts." The kitten then wiped his mouth with his sleeve. "Boys will be boys"

"Can't keep the boys waiting forever back on the field", so the third kitten gave Raven one more look over.

"What are you looking up, throw-up boy?"

He smiled and then chases his buddies back to the field to finish the game of kick string ball that they were playing.

"That was a close one" said mouse whispered into Raven's ear.

"You better keep going for the sooner we are out of this town the better for both of us."

"Don't get your mouse tail in a knot; I know how to be a feline in this forsaken town"

To her surprise, it was like any other small village or town for there was a milkshake shop, a catnip smoke shop, and the neighborhood grocery store. Out of the grocery store came a familiar face carrying a grocery bag.

Charlie, the white and black cat, from pigeon town recognized Raven immediately. "You shouldn't be out walking about in the streets; it isn't safe especially that Sherriff, who is still looking for you." She then told Charlie what happen to Sam and Cherry. Charlie was in shock and overwhelm with emotion." I just can't believe it, I just saw them at the dub and now they are both gone."

"Let me help you with the groceries", and she took one of the bags. Charlie told her that his apartment was just a block away and they started in that direction. Charlie was still shaking as he open the door and led Raven in. "Do you want some catnip tea? said Charlie. "It is very good on the nerves."

"When the sheriff finds out about their deaths, he may call off the search for you too, but in any case you shouldn't stay in the village. Cats are very friendly when they want to be, but they are very independent and if it protection of their own fur that is on the line vs. another. Well, I am just trying to say, it wouldn't take too much to get one talking if you know what I mean."

“Unless, they are having a hairball”, whispered the mouse.

Charlie handed her a cup of tea and she took a sip. She was surprised how good it tasted and mouse was still well hidden under her jacket, very happy not to have been noticed or introduced to Charlie.

“So, how have you been, it can’t be very fun being on the run and not knowing where your next shelter is going to be.”

Raven simply nodded, and told him about old puff, and that she still doesn’t have all of the answers or direction that she is looking for. Charlie totally understood.

“Life isn’t easy, nor does it always give you direct answers, but with time. With the proper time it seems to always sort it out or at least a distinct pattern of what your life is like and where it is headed.

“You can stay in the apartment for a couple of days if you think it will help”

“Thanks Charlie” “I must be going though, I wouldn’t think of putting you into any more harm or under any anxiety by harboring a wanted fugitive and all. It is better that I get back to my journey, and see if I can find my way home again. I am so very glad we ran into each other.”

“Before you go, let me make you a couple of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to take along with you.”
“I am glad you have a coat for they say that the weather is going to be changing this week, and we may even get a chance of some light snow.”

Raven gave Charlie a big hug and took the sandwiches that he had made for her and then left the apartment. The day was still young and as they walked further out of the village, mouse appeared out of her jacket.

“Cats you either hate them or love them” “Mouse you be kind now, Charlie is one of the good ones and even though he looks scary as a cat bike dude with tattoos, he has a real heart made of pure gold”

They walked in silence for a while, raven always gets a little depressed whenever her body gets sick, it was like a mind-body connection she thought. She felt a little off and was wondering if she was coming down with a cold or something.

They stopped in the afternoon by a river to eat their sandwiches and she saw a small shelter made out of a cliff area nearby. The mouse and raven took a closer look at it and it seems like good shelter for them to stay the night.

“Mouse, I don’t know about you but my legs are getting very tired. Let’s rest here for the night and then we can get a fresh start in the morning. They build a small fire to keep warm. It was just past midnight when she heard her name mentioned. At first, she thought she was dreaming, until she felt an acorn hit her head.

There was a squirrel looking at her with an apron on and a bonnet tied around her head. “Are you Raven” “I just might be, but who is asking and what about that acorn that just hit my head”

“I am sorry about that, you didn’t wake up, and well, they said this was important, to wake you up and all”

“Slow down, nut breath, who are they that are looking for me?”

“Well come with me, and you can see for yourself. Here take this candle and don’t get too close to my tail or you are going to get a beating from me, if you bum my fir.”

The Christmas Encounter:

“Mouse so are you coming or are you staying?” Mouse looked at Raven as if she was losing her mind. “You are really going chasing after this bushy tail squirrel at this time of night” “I need my beauty sleep, go ahead and chase that tail if you may, I am going to stay put until I see the early morning light of day.

Squirrel looked at Raven as if she was going to lose patient and temper, so ‘One last time, are you coming or are you not?’”

“My mother use to give me that look, I don’t need that from you too.”

The squirrel looked at raven, “they told me, they didn’t teach a lot of manners from where you came from, look the mouse is staying are you going to follow me or not.”

Raven gave out a sigh and would rather have mouse come along if nothing else but moral support. She decided to followed squirrel and jumped into a canoe together that was made out of acorns. Squirrel gave her an oar, and they started to paddle down the river. The river glowed before them as if there was some type of organic fresh water jelly fishes that were lighting their way. The river then spitted into two parts, and they headed to the right and started to gather up some speed through some choppy white rapids. The squirrel was very good in navigating through the rocks. They then stopped and landed at a sandy cove.

There was a group of animals and they were all kneeling in front of a small manger.

“Do you know what day it is, Raven.” Oh, I think you got the wrong girl here squirrel, I am Jewish. “Just the other day, Old Puff the dragon was saying what a good Jewish girl I am.”

I am Jewish too, and then she saw Mary with a baby wrapped in her hands speaking directly to her.

She had a serenity and glow that no words could describe and took raven’s breath away.

“Come take a look, Raven.” Raven came closer; please hold him for a moment.” Raven held the baby and she felt an incredible peace come over her body. Raven looked at Mary. “Is this Jesus?”

It is all of the babies of the world, and all of our futures that are link together. Raven looked down at the baby in her arms, and the baby face started to turn from one beautiful face to another from all ethnic groups and cultures.

Mary smiled, “Raven, and you know all of our beautiful faiths are all interconnected together, and you are as much Jewish as I am within our given culture. It is important for you to know that on this holiest of day that we are all Jewish, all Christians, and all Buddhist.

So today is Christmas?

Yes today is Christmas. It is also the day that I am bringing you home to your mother.”

“You mean back home to Mom and Dad.”

“Yes, they are extremely worried about you” “It is time to go home, my child”

“I need to say goodbye to mouse.” Raven, the squirrel will tell mouse what happen here today, and will also help him get back to Old puff where he belongs.

Raven handed the baby Jesus back to Mary.

A beautiful Archangel then appeared. “Gabriel, I want you to take Raven back to her parents” “They are very worried and concern for her well-being.”

Merry Christmas, Raven.

The Hospital:

Merry Christmas was the last words that raven remembered hearing. It was Christmas day; she was in some type of hospital quarantine room with tubes and other medical devices hooked up to her. The nurse was in one of those bubble total protection suit, and was working in a new IV medication that the doctor had ordered in to raven's arm, when she notice that her eyes suddenly opened.

'My god you are conscious' "Can you hear me", Raven nodded her head. Raven could see her mother and father in the outside viewing area. They were in tears to see that their daughter was still alive.

After being awake for a few days, and without any fevers or additional complications, they moved her out of quarantine and into a normal room. Her bed was covered with stuff animals and her room was filled with flowers and balloons.

Her mother and father came every day to stay next to her by her bedside while she was recovering.

Half your schools have been here to see you during the holiday break. They all were very concern for you. Here is a special card from a boy name Jason, who seems to be extra concern over you. He said he was in one of your classes. At one time, the doctor didn't think that you were going to make it. This was a total different strain of bird flu that they had ever seen before so they had to take all of the extra protocols.

The doctors stated that you can go home tomorrow. School will be starting for the New Year. It will be so wonderful to get your life back to a normal life pattern.

We also met Holly your new boss, she has also been by a few times and told us to tell you not to worry about the job that she will has it waiting for you once you gotten better. She seems to be a very lovely lady.

Raven read all of her cards and was thankful for having such a caring hospital staff that treated her so well.

We almost lost you a couple of times; raven, your father and I couldn't have lived if anything had ever happen to you. Now get some rest now and we will see you in first thing in the morning to take you home.

That night, two spirit dogs jumped on Raven's hospital bed and started howling at the full moon.

"Raven woke up from a deep sleep. Come with us now, you are needed, as the alpha male growled its teeth."

The doctor had taken out all of the IV's that afternoon, so raven grab a hospital robe from the side chair. She took her time in putting the robe around her. The spirit dogs with their hair sparkling with magiclite the entry way to raven's room. She didn't know where this was going to lead too, but she knew that now that she was back on old planet Earth, talking to Spirit dogs could not be a good thing at all.

She followed the spirit dog down the hall way opposite of the nurses' station. It was getting late and most of the regular visitors have already left for the day. The spirit dogs went into one of the ICU heart monitoring room.

"Oh, this is definitely not a good thing, Raven said to herself".

Raven walked into the room and the room was completely dark. The ceiling was lighted with a clear night of a galaxy of stars shining brightly. She then notice that once she entered the room, the stars started to spin and the galaxy took the shape of a human eye that seemed to be looking down at her.

The spirit dogs came in after her and the door closed behind her. The floor of the room was covered with red and white rose petals that seem to ripple like waves within an ocean.

There was a square clear glass case in the middle of the room and it was about a foot in dimension with in height, depth, and width. Inside of the glass case, a single human heart was beating. There were twelve candles floating around the case giving additional illumination to the entire room.

It was beating very slowly. The case was hovering in midair without anything supporting it.

Raven notice that there was what at first looked like a child on bended knees that was in silent meditation or prayer. But as Raven got closer, she notice that it wasn't a child at all, but an angel with her wings closed and wearing a simple gown. The Angels hands were together in prayer holding a golden rosary. As Raven got closer to the case she could hear the beating of the heart within the case.

The angel was younger then raven, may be ten or eleven of age. The spirit dogs came and kneeled before the angel as if to also protect her.

"Raven, please kneel beside me". "What you see before you is the heart of all mankind. It is not well and I am worried." "The beating is weaker and weaker as each age comes and goes"

"It needs to be restored and go back to its original state, and the only way is for you to give up yours."

"Oh, I think you got the wrong girl, girlfriend" "They are releasing me tomorrow. Bird flu and all, I surely am not the proper donor, blood type, or the hero that you are looking for."

"Mary, the mother of Jesus, even gave me a blessing. I think am nearly a saint."

"A saint" "That is exactly why you are her"

The glass case of the heart started to vibrate and the glass panels dropped open as the heart was now just transparent in midair. Raven then started to feel a strange sensation from her mid-chest, and she saw a line of blood coming through her hospital gown.

Her chest then opened up and she wasn't feeling any pain, but she actually saw her living heart the floated out of her body still beating as if it was still inside of her.

"Don't worry Raven; it will be over very shortly." Her heart floated to the Angel and Angel held her heart. Raven could feel the angel's hands inside of her chest even though her heart was in her actual hands.

It is time and the heart that was in the glass fell and shatters into thousands of rose petals as it hit the floor. The angel then took raven's heart and put it carefully into the glass case, and closed the glass panels.

"Raven your heart has replaced the old, and is now the heart of all mankind. You were born for this calling to heal the earth and to transform all spirits to the glory of the kingdom. The spirit dogs and I will protect you so never be afraid."

"You must now return and where there is darkness bring the light of your heart and compassion to those who are desperately in need."

The Angel then gave Raven a hug, and then she showed a ruby heart ring that was in the palm of her hand. "Give me your left hand", Raven, and the Angel slipped the ruby ring on to her ring finger. "This ring will be a reminder to you of our covenant of your heart, and where your heart is, and that it will always be blessed and protected for all mankind."

One of the spirit dogs came and nudged her, and she carefully petted its head, and it started to purr like a kitten. The Angel then lead her to the door and said, "It is time for you to continue your journey"

Be brave and be good my little one, and she opened the door and Raven walked out to what she was expecting to be a hospital corridor.

Instead, it was a corridor with an orange line in the middle. There was a sign with a green arrow that have the words, "Nirvana, This Way" She said, "Well, the sign must mean something or else it wouldn't be there" So she started to walk down the middle orange line down the middle of the corridor. It then made a right turn. There wasn't one of those mirrors in the corner so she was completely blind on what was on the other side.

She took a deep breath and turned the corner. There was a black leather barber chair and there was a line of girls that had already had their head shaven wearing orange gowns. The barber was a toothless elderly man with blue orange hair that was dress in a formal dress tuxedo.

"Good day to you, are you ready for your enlightenment" "My what? Replied Raven, not really picking up on what was going on. If you mean are you really going to shave my head completely bald, you are asking the wrong girl my toothless friend."

"There is no need to be impolite or angry, miss. I am just an old tuxedo monk doing my sacred ceremonies."

“That may be so, but tell me one thing, why do monks always have toothless grins, don’t you have floss in Tibet or any good dentists.”

“My poor, poor child, you see appearances are not what matter for all is transitory and what is young will become old, and that which is old will become young again.”

“If you allow me to shave your head, it would be a great privilege, and your hair will grow back just as nice as you have it today”

You can then join the other as they travel to Nirvana, and he pointed to another sign above his head that was neon green that blinked Nirvana this way, one mile.

Raven twisted her hair as one of her many nervous habits, and weighed her options. She could turn back and work her way back from where she came from or what her gut was seeming to be telling her right now that going back would be a bad decision. If she couldn’t go back, then she should just continue to go forward. What if these people were a part of some type of cult that was trying to take advantage of a poor girl that just had the bird flu? It didn’t look pretty either way, and she couldn’t imagine being bald for three months until her hair grew back in.

“Can I ask you a question then before I make a final decision?” “Anything”, said the barber.

“So tell me why the Tuxedo?”

Don’t monks normally wear traditional robes?”

“They told me that you were going to keep me on my toes. The answer is that this is a celebration, your celebration. We are celebrating your enlightenment and your journey to Nirvana.”

“So who are they,” said Raven.

“They? the barber smiled, “why they are the Angels of course. They know more about you then you even know about yourself”

“One of them stopped by the other day for a trim when we were a little bit slow and he talked about a brave young girl who was on such an amazing journey and had a ring of the heart of Angels on her hand.”

“The barber, then came and said may I, and took her hand and admired her ring, and then folded her hand and gave it a simple kiss.”

“You really don’t know how special you are, do you?”

“You have the gift, don’t you know and have been chosen out of many. But you do know that being chosen isn’t like being Miss America, it not being place on a pedestal, it is all about being a servant of God’s will within the Angelic realm of Heaven above.”

Raven stared at the monk, and thought that the performance that he just gave should win him an Oscar or a Golden Globe at least.

“You are a very good actor, Mr. Barber. I know your type, all flash and then all disappointment.”

“Don’t compare me to any of your past relationships, and don’t you know that you are here to take care of some old Karma you had in a past life.”

“Don’t you lecture me, monk.”

Raven was surprised by the way the given words just came out as harsh as they did, but for some reason what he just said was touching an old nerve in her soul not unlike a root canal operation she had in the past for an infected tooth.

“Look you look tense, come and sit in the barber chair. I will simply give you a free shoulder and neck massage and we can talk some more about past lives and your karmic destiny.”

Raven sat down in the barber’s chair. “Just a shoulder and neck massage and no funny business”

The barber got out steam towels and laid them on her neck and shoulders. Her muscles were tight and the towels were relaxing. The barber then started the massage and Raven started to calm down a bit.

The barber had strong masculine hands that gave Raven a deep pressure massage within her sore tired muscles.

“So let me talk to you about past lives”, ‘Good or Bad, they are like pieces of glass within your soul that need to be carefully taken out of your karma. If you don’t, they will fester and infect more of your issues in this lifetime. You see your soul is the great continuum that carries you forward. Your awareness intuition is what you need to listen to and what is there to help you within your chosen path.”

“Look, you are in this barber chair at this exact time at this precise moment for a real specific reason, Raven. You need to go through this ceremony shave your head so you can move on and get to Nirvana.”

“If I don’t let you shave my head then what will happen to me?”

“Well, if I may say, it wouldn’t be pretty. You will be recycled and start all over again from the bottom up. You may be an ant on a hill or a fly on a piece of cherry pie. “

“This really doesn’t make much sense to me and you seem to even be threatening me with become somewhat subhuman if I don’t follow your specific directions.”

“It is never a threat, it all about learning lessons and growing, even in your faith, you believe that you must serve others and by doing good deeds you are making a holy road to heaven. It is not our faith but our deeds that will measure the quality of our lives.”

The barber took his shaving knife and began sharpening it while humming a peaceful tune.

“So how do you know what needs to be address in a past life”

“Well, said the barber, it normally is that one thing that has always holds you back, that little bit of negativity that doesn’t allow you to move forward in the riches of your new life.”

“Like the fear of losing my hair”, said Raven.

The barber looked deeply at Raven before answering.

“Yes, exactly, just like the fear of losing one’s hair.”

“Ok”, said Raven.” Shave it all if you like. I am more than my hair any way.”

“That is exactly what Sampson said”, reply the barber.

Raven gave a dirty look at the barber, while he took out his shaving shearers and started to shave Raven’s hair. Raven could feel the hair being shaven and falling into black clumps on the floor.

Raven didn’t cry but she felt strange not having her beautiful hair any longer, and having all of her hair being taken away by the barber.

The barber then but warm shaving lotion on her hair and took the newly sharpen knife and clean up the rest of her head making her completely bald.

“You did it, and we are now finish, you can know go and put on this robe and follow the other girls to Nirvana and there all of your questions will be answered and more.”

Raven put on the robe in a small dressing area next to the barber chair and then she went and got in line with the rest of the girls.

Raven got in line. The girl turned around, and reached out her hand.

“My name is Sunflower and I am so glad to meet you. I am so excited, our group is next to go, so it should not be very much longer of a wait for us.” “I just hate to wait, don’t you?”

“The most important thing to remember is to stay on the line and in line. Do not get separated or drift off alone. Who knows where you will end up if you did, and I am know for sure it wouldn’t be Nirvana if you did.”

“What is your name?” Raven stared at Sunflower as if she was completely lost her mind. She still couldn’t believe she had allowed her head to be completely shaven by the mad barber from Seville.

“Don’t you just feel it, it is so incredible” Raven, shrugged her shoulders. “Feel what, I don’t feel anything” “Why bliss of course, the oneness with everything and beyond”

“Sunflower to be totally honest with you, I think you may be not getting all the proper watering that you need” “I don’t feel anything at all”

The line then started to move, and Sunflower was totally beside herself, we are finally moving, so we will be there in no time at all, Nirvana or bust.

The line of girls moved down the corridor. The line then stopped; there was an escalator going up and one going down. A table had been setup and there was a clerk that looked very professional with a pastel colored tie on. There was also a helper next to him.

As each girl came up, he said paper please. Each girl reached into her gown and brought out a paper. The clerk then reviewed each paper work very carefully, and then either stamps an approval or denial onto the form.

It was now Sunflower’s turn. She skipped up and gave her form all bubbly and jazz up. The man was stern while looking at her document. He dramatically stamped an approval onto her form. It was as if the fourth of July just occurred.

Sunflower, turned and lifted Raven right off the gown. “I made it, I really have made it.” “I will see you soon on the other side.”

She then stepped onto the escalator that was heading up, and waved goodbye to raven.

“Next”, shouted the clerk that was now seem to be trying to help speed up the review process as the line was getting long and the girls were getting more restless by the minutes.

Raven found her document in her robe and gave it to the clerk.

“This is not acceptable, who gave you this and who told you to get into this line. You are not supposed to be here at all. This is totally a mistake of incredible proportions.”

Raven just stared for a minute first at the clerk blankly.

“The barber of course”, she then responded.

“You are not on the invitational list at all; this is so very unconventional, very unconventional indeed.

“It truly upsets me when formal protocol is broken, you see it’s the rules and the rules are never meant to be broken, if they are then they wouldn’t be the rules in the first place. Don’t you see my point?”

“Get me the barber at once?” and the clerk helper went in the direction from where raven had just come from.

The clerk was not a people person and didn't smile at raven at all during any point of their discussions.

"Don't take this personal, it isn't about you, it about standard protocol. I am surely you understand?"

The barber arrived with the helper in toll, and the clerk stares was not one of very affection to him.

"So tell me barber, why did you cut this poor girls hair off, she is not on the official list, she shouldn't be going to Nirvana?"

"I would like to kindly disagree with you sir", reply the barber. "I did follow all of the requirements that were given to me and even more." "Here is my list and she is definitely on it. See right here, and she is also a very special VIP. See there is an Angel star, next to her name, and she is wearing the Angel's heart ring."

"So why is your list, different then my list" The two must always be the same, if not then she must go to the actuary office for proper reconciliation.

"Now wait a minute here, are you saying that I am some type of item on a balance sheet"

The clerk looks at the barber and then at ravens, "why of course that is what we are saying. There has to be check and balances of all things in nature, and you currently are not in the balance column are you poor child."

"Take her to actuary office immediately; I just hope they still have time today to review her file. Barber, please get her there and out of my line. I have already wasted too much time and currently in jeopardy of meeting our quota for Nirvana today.

"The barber bowed, of course, immediate, sir". "Raven, follow me we must leave now to the actuary office." Raven stepped out of line, and a new line appeared that was yellow, and the line said pending audit. "So now I have to go through some type of review process."

'I don't make the rule around here, I just try to enforce them" "My paperwork is almost always correct, and you see right here, it is stated your name and it has an angel symbol next to it which mean that you are special and have a high priority."

"So if your paperwork is right, then what is going on? We won't know until we get to the actuary office and talk to the registry. I might just me a small misunderstanding and we can get it all cleared up in just a few minutes."

They came to two glass doors with a formal marble entrance way, there was a security guard that was checking security badges to get in. There was a very professional lady in a suit carrying a briefcase that was in the line in front of them. See must work in the office, because the guard barely look at her badge or briefcase and just waved her in.

Raven and the barber got to the security counter. "Your papers, please?"

Barber handed his badge to him and raven's paperwork that he had with him.

"Please take a seat, this may take a while." There were a couple of seats that were not occupied to the left of the security guard, and they went and sat down. All of the other seats were already occupied.

The beings that were sitting were all just a little bit odd looking to raven.

One looked like a camel only by its head above his shoulder alone that was on a humanoid boy's body with a lizard like tail.

Barber looked at raven, "it not polite to stare" "I am not staring, you were the one staring". Camel mutant blew its nose and did overhear them and gave them a nasty stare.

"It is people like you that causes all of the problems around here by not accepting diversity and have set back the mutant rights for way to long."

"We meant no harm, just waiting for our turn just like you are"

"Mutants, they are so sensitive aren't they?" "Very thin skin if I may add", whispered the barber."

The security guard called barber's name, and he said that they are both approved to go in.

This infuriated the camel boy for he has been waiting for days to get a hearing on his case setup. The guard saw what was happening and stepped in, "Now you know the given protocol if you make one more rash actions it's just going to delay and set back your case even further".

Raven didn't want to make any further eye contact with anyone, and just kept her head down while they went through the security gate as fast as they could to get some distance from the camel boy and them.

The same lady that Raven saw earlier in the suit was there to greet them on the other side of security.

"Please follow me, the registrar is very eager to meet with you, and have heard so much about you. They walked across an open public area to the elevators. They got into the first East elevator and she selected the 44 floor. The elevator seems to stop at every floor and people came in and out without too much notice to either raven or the barber.

The elevator then arrived at the 44th floor and they all got out. They then went to the door that had Registrar name on it. The lady used another security card that simply opened the door to allow them in.

There was a red headed secretary that smiled and said; "he is waiting for you, please come in."

So the three of them proceeded to the room to the left, and entered in.

It was like any other office room, Raven thought to herself. She was expecting more than just normal wall to wall carpeting and the standard government business décor.

The registrar was on the phone finishing up a conversation.

"I am just saying that this has gone on way to long, enough already with your darn excuses"

"We need straight answers and practical solution with given time line a.s.a.p."

He waved them all in to take a seat in front of his desk, as he was finishing up the call.

"I don't want to hear about lack of internal resources, do your hear me? Good, just get it done as quick as you can, and give me a time line by end of business today. Thank you and he rubbed his head as if a migraine was coming on.

He then hang up the phone forcefully that seemed a little bit too passive aggressive for raven's taste.

A very normal looking man in his forties wearing a black suit with a blue tie was now staring at the barber, raven and the lady in the blue suit.

"Thank you all for waiting, it seems like I have been putting out one fire after another today. Your paper's please. "The lady handed over the file that she had in front of her and the barber handed over his papers also.

How old are you? He asked Raven. "I just turned 16." "16", repeated the registrar "I see said the registrar with a concern look on his face." "Your parents, are they alive or dead?"

"Alive", said Raven. The registrar than said, "you see, that is the simple problem here: Simple math." "To get your hair cut by the barber here, the age limit is 16, but to get into Nirvana it is 18." You are still a minor here, pure and simple.

"Normally, the age is always double checked, but because you had a special angel star next to your name, no one thought of double checking it." He then stared at the barber, who lowered his head.

"I really apologize for all of the inconvenience, raven", and then he gave barber a look to indicate that he was totally at fault here for the given screw up and all."

The registrar then looked at the lady in the blue suit and told her to take Raven down to reprocessing and to get this situation corrected immediately. We are finished her, and then phone rang again and the registrar started to work on his next issue of the day.

They all got up at once, but the registrar stopped his phone conversation and asked for the barber to stay a few minutes. While raven was leaving the room with the Lady, she could just feel the tension in the room growing.

“Barber isn’t in trouble is he?”

The lady in the suit patted her on the back, “don’t worry, the barber is old enough to take care of himself”, but raven wasn’t too sure about that nor too sure of what was going to happen to her next.

They had to go back into the elevator and this time the lady in the blue suit selected the bottom button that was labeled reprocessing. “You look worried”, she said to raven.

“There really nothing to worry about except that we need to get you back to where you belong sooner than later.”

The elevator door opens to the bottom floor and they got out of the elevator. There was a small coffee shop just around the corner. “Do you mind if we stop and get a cup of coffee first before we take you to reprocessing” “I haven’t had my coffee yet, and I can really be off if I haven’t had my coffee yet”

“Do you want anything, my treat?”

Raven said, “I will take one of those brand banana muffins and a small orange juice if that will be alright.” “Perfect”, she said, and she went to the counter to get her French coffee latte and Raven’s orange juice and muffin.

She came back and they sat at one of the side tables off to the side of the coffee shop. Raven was hungry and bit into the muffin. The lady looked at her. “Can I give you a bit of advice, Raven? “

““I know that sixteen is a very hard tough age but time moves fast and what decisions you make in the next few years is going to lead you on your career and destiny. Don’t make choices without thinking through the consequences, and where they may lead you. Can you promise me that you will always think, before you jump into anything? I know it isn’t easy, but I know that I gave up a family for my career and I always have wondered if it was the right choice.”

“Choices, Raven, One leads to another and they will take you through life, but it is important that you make the right ones and always listen to your guardian angels and heart.”

She then notices the beautiful heart ring that was on raven’s hand.” That is a beautiful ring”

Raven smiled and admired how the light reflected off the ruby stone.

She finished up her coffee, and raven finished up her muffin and orange juice.

“Well, we better not wait any longer let’s get you down for reprocessing, or the registrar will get my head on a platter.” They got up from the table and went down a well-lighted hallway. It seemed like it was turning more into a hospital setting then a government business hallway. She passes some rooms that had actual patients in them that were hooked up to medical monitoring devices.

They then came to a double steel door that said reprocessing unit. "Well, Raven". This is where we say our goodbyes. I will say goodbye to barber for you. You just need to go through those doors and a nurse will help you with you're reprocessing on the other side.

"Be good, and be strong", she than gave Raven a hug that really didn't feel like a hug at all. It almost seems that she didn't want to get too close to raven and thought she might catch something from her.

Raven opened up the double door, and turned back to look at the lady in the blue business dress one last time.

The doors slammed closing behind her. She looked into a grove of cherry trees in blossoms. The trees were all in the row and the blossoms were a beautiful pink red. There was a path through the grove, so she decided to walk down it. It smelled wonderful and it seemed to reenergize every cell that was in her very being.

The Elves and Trolls:

There were blue butterflies that were like small clouds that moved in motion together, and around the grove passing just above her head. There were red poppies on the side of the path. It was simply breath taking and she just felt that she was reborn in the most wonderful sacred place.

She then walked out of the grove and there was a pond with three water falls. There were elves with transparent wings that were bathing and playing in the water. Raven had never seen elves before and couldn't believe how beautiful they were.

Out of the water, a tall beautiful female elf with a silver crown and yellow transparent wings approached her, and smiled at Raven. "We were told that you were coming here and would be bathing with us." "The water is most wonderful. Please come and join us and leave all your worries behind."

Raven, wasn't big on water, and never like getting her hair wet. She then realize that she didn't have any hair, and that barber had shaved her completely bald, so nothing to lose, why not.

What is the old saying again? If one is in Rome, do as the Roman's do.

She slipped out of her robe and could feel the warm breeze on her naked body. The elves helped her into the water that seemed to glisten with golden soft sand under her feet. She felt very self-conscious, when she notice that the other elf's had stopped all of their activities, and were staring at her as she came into the pond. They all seem to be giggle way too much, raven thought silently to her-self.

The elf with the silver crown and pointed ears then said, "Please swim with me to the main waterfall".

Raven swam her best, but the elf was much more of a stronger swimmer then she was. We are here to help you raven, let us put this special lotion on your head and it will help your beautiful hair to grow back. As the elf with the silver crown put the ointment on her head and started to rub the lotion in, another elf came up to them and started to massage ravens tight shoulders.

Immediately, Raven felt a strange sensation, and she actually felt her hair growing back immediately. There is nothing to fear with us. These are the healing springs of nature, and we are the caretakers who heal those who are sick or are in need of special care.

Just in a few minutes, her beautiful long black hair was back to normal, and one of the elves took a comb made from a sea shell and started to comb her silky natural hair. They took her hands and message the stress out of her hands also and used a special orange color polish for her nails. Raven could see herself in the reflections off the cliffs of the waterfalls, and she has never seen herself so beautiful. It was as if she was having a complete makeover. The water itself seems to have some type of mineral healing as the dark patches that were under her eyes were completely gone.

They gave her a flower lace robe, and gave her a foot message and pedicure by the pond's edge . Raven was totally relaxed; this has been the most wonderful experience that I have ever had. This is better than any resort spa I have been to with my mother.

“Thank you, Thank you so much.” I have been through so much and this is the very first time I have been able to be completely myself and relax at all.”

“We want you to stay the night with us Raven, so you can be completely healed before you continue on your journey. It would be an honor and a delight if you to stay with us.”

Raven smile, “are you crazy this is better than staying at a five star resort.” The elf with the silver crown, clapped her hands, two beautiful swans came. “Please Jump on, they are very kind hearted”

Once they were on their backs the swans went toward the third water fall on the right side of the falls. The swan went gracefully into the waterfall, and which hid an opening to the Elves’ village of the Kingdom. The swans swam up the river and then up to what looked like the main port or landing area for the village. They got off the swans, and they both thank them for the ride.

Raven notice immediately, that all of the other elves did a small bow to the elf that she was accompanied with.

“Are you some sort of royalty or Queen”, said Raven, not trying to be impolite, but more like trying to get her own bearings and perspectives to her new environment.

“I am glad you ask, no I am not a queen, but I am a princess.

My name is Princess Caroline. I am the Princess and caretaker of this village.” “Should I bow to you”, said Raven, wanting to make a good impression.

Princess Caroline smiled, “only if you like to, only my elves should bow in my presence.” They then came to very cute bungalow near the river side.

“This is where you will be staying. Please freshen up and I will send for you when dinner is ready to be served. I thought you would feel more comfortable in your own surroundings then at the palace proper.”

Raven walked in and there was a small kitchen area, and a bath with a single master bedroom. She decided to lie down for a minute on the bed and stared at the blank ceiling to collect her thoughts.

“I thought I was going to be going for reprocessing, and then all of a sudden I am back in some type of fantasy land.” “This makes pigeon town look like a city slum”

“I must be having some type of relapse to the bird flu or something even worst?” “I can’t believe how perfect everything is here.” “The elves seem to be such nice and kind people and they even able to restore my hair back to normal.”

It was just a couple of hours that have gone by and there was a couple of firm knocks on the door of the bungalow. Raven went to see who it was and it was very nice looking elves that state that he will be her escort to dinner. Raven didn't think that she needed an escort, but if she had to choose one this one looked pretty ideal with perfect white teeth and emerald green eyes. His hair was silver and was tied in the back. He was the most handsome boy that she had ever seen. He had a package for her, and said that "Princesses Caroline has given her a new gown for the dinner that she may feel more comfortable in for tonight's activity."

"A formal dinner, how exciting"

"Just give me a few minutes to fresh up, and she took the package back to the bed room and locked the door behind her. She quickly opened up the package and it was a beautiful blue chiffon strapless dress. It was the most beautiful dress that she had ever seen, and she tried it on. A perfect fit as she looked at her figure on the mirror to her closet door.

She then went into the bathroom and brushed her hair one more time and brushed her teeth with the new toothbrush and mouthwash that was there. "They think of everything here, she thought to herself."

She heard a knock on the door.

"My lady are you almost ready, they are expecting us soon."

Raven couldn't believe the time that had gone by and how she has gotten all caught up in this Cinderella ball thing. It was just a dinner party with the princess of the whole Fairy Kingdom, she said while laughing at herself. Back home, I wouldn't be caught dead at such an event or in such a dress.

She opened up the bedroom door. "My lady please, we must go at once, or else the princess will be very displeased by having to wait so long for your arrival." Raven smiled at her escort and gripped his arm that was held out for her not trying to stare at his wings.

"I am ready now my kind sir; let's go without any further delays."

She stepped out of the bungalow and her jaw dropped. There was a beautiful carriage in shape of a swan with golden trim that was being pulled by two beautiful snow leopards. Her escorted helped her up into the carriage and the escort then jumped in on the other side and took the reins. The carriage ride was simply wonderful; the sunlight was low on the horizon and was making all of the stone work and sculptures even more beautiful than they were already.

They took a path through a marketplace that had flower carts. The elf stopped by one and picked out a beautiful wrist flower bouquet for her. He paid with a silver coin, and asked raven if he could have the honor of putting it on her wrist. Raven tried not to blush, and the handsome elf put the flower bouquet of roses and violets on her left wrist.

They then followed up the canal through town and they had to go over several bridges. A couple of times, when Raven went over the bridge, she felt as if someone else was watching them, but she thought it were just her paranoid feelings reappearing again against her will. When things are going to well, she always gets a raw feeling that something or someone was going to sabotage it. She then saw the palace itself with its majestic domes and arch ways with marble towers reaching dramatically into the sky.

Is that the palace? “Yes, it is my fair lady, we are almost there” The snow leopards seem to speed up knowing that they were almost at their destination and it also there nightly feeding time. They went over the draw bridge, and pulled up to the entrance of the palace. Two elves were there to greet them, and one quickly took care of the leopards and carriage, and took them into the palace stables. The other one looked like a butler, with a long tail coat on with a frock shirt. Her escort took her arm and the other opened up the palace door for them while making an announcement of their arrival.

The first thing she saw was an incredible chandelier, and beautiful mosaic murals on the walls of the foyer room. They were already seated in the dining room the butler told them, and the escort nodded and quickly walked Raven through several ornate decorated rooms into the larger formal dinner room.

It was exactly what she expected and more. The escort walked her to the two open chairs and they both sat down. There was already a lively conversation going on, something that was funny that occurred at the elf parliament that day. A very interesting creature came up behind Raven that almost frightened her half to death.

The creature was something that she had never seen before. Its face was hairy and seemed to be disfigured in a way too large for its body.

It was carrying a carat of white wine, and had a towel draped around his right arm.

“Her escort leaned in to her, excuse the dinner troll. It wasn’t trying to scare you. They are just trying to do their duty and eternal obligation to all. Would you like him to serve you some wine my lady.” “It my settle you nerves and all”.

Raven nodded, and the troll quickly filled her crystal glass and gave a big bow. Raven now notice numerous trolls that were helping with the dinner and preparing the meal for the elves. All the trolls were completely silent but seem to move together as one as if performing in a musical together.

The escort seemed to be amused by Raven’s interest in the trolls. Troll’s are not elf’s my lady, and they do not talk. They communicate by sign language. Trolls have served the Elf Kingdom for centuries, and deem it as their life time duty and absolute callings for their entire lives.

“Do they live in the palace”, asked Raven. The escort laughed, “No my kind Lady, they live under bridges like all Trolls do.” It reminded her of what African Americans might have felt while serving their white masters long time ago on the tobacco farms.

This all seem very odd to Raven, and before she could ask any more specific troll questions, Caroline took her spoon, and touched her crystal wine class making a ringing sound.

“Good evening to everyone, and thank you for coming to our dinner tonight. I would like to introduce you all to Raven who will be our guest for tonight. She is not from the elf kingdom as you could probably all tell by now, but I want everyone to treat her as if she was one of our royal family members.”

Raven bowed to the princess and thanked her so much for the kind words and to the formal dinner invitation that she shouldn't have gone through all of the trouble of such a formal event in her honor.

“Nonsense”, said the princess. “This is very truly a special honor to have you break bread with us tonight.”

The princess then rang a tiny silver bell; “please bring us our first dinner course”.

Several doors, opened at once, and numerous trolls came in with soups and then hot plates of vegetables and rice dishes. Everyone seemed to be very hungry and was enjoying the food. She could still hear bits and pieces of conversation about the current political environment within the kingdom, but couldn't tell if the discussion was something good or bad.

She still couldn't stop looking at the trolls, there seem to be something very sad about them, but she couldn't put her finger on it yet.

The elf on her other side was a mature soldier elf, and seem to be highly decorated. He had a unique scar on his face. He made some jokes to the princess that made her laugh, but didn't engage raven in any conversation at all. Her escort on the other hand was very outgoing and try to change the dinner topic to anything but the trolls that raven was having a very hard time not staring.

They finished their main courses, and then the trolls brought out trays of all different type of deserts. The mint chocolate truffles were simply amazing and raven decided that this was no time for a diet.

After dinner, the trolls cleared the plates, and the elves all went into the main ballroom where music was already being played. There was a string quartet, and they were playing an old fashion waltz.

Raven's escort asked kindly for her hand, and then helped her through most of the dance steps. Raven was just trying not to step on his feet as she was looking down at her feet for most of the music. The escort was very gracious and then Raven asked for a rest in which case the escort agreed upon without any hesitation.

“Do you like the music?” “Yes”, said Raven.

“The whole night has been truly wonderful. But you know, I have had a very full day and do you mind if you take me back to my bungalow now.”

The Princess Caroline was listening in on the conversation, and came over immediately. “My poor dear, I have been a bad host and I should have known how tired you must be from your travels. We have already made you a bed just in case you wanted to stay here at the palace tonight; please stay here tonight as my personal honored guest.”

“Thank you, I will take you up on your kind offer”, Princess Caroline then gave specific directions to the butler that first opened the palace door for her to please take Raven up to her room at once.

Before she left the ball room with the butler, her escorted took her hand and kissed it. “It was a real pleasure to be your escort for the night and I hope to see you again.” Raven said, “Thank you, it has been a wonderful and delightful night.”

“Until we meet again, my lady”, the escort gave a romantic bow.

“This way” said the butler, and he led Raven to one of the upstairs bedroom. The bedroom was amazing and the bedroom itself was the size of the bungalow that they had originally gave her to stay in.

There was a flannel white night gown on the bed. She slipped out of her blue gown and hung it carefully in the closet. She put the gown on and went to the bathroom too brush her teeth and wash her face.

There was a knock on the door. Raven went to the door and opened it. Standing in front of her was a troll, smaller than the others but just as peculiar. The troll was holding a tray of hot chocolate chip cookies and a glass of warm milk. The trolls bowed and walked into her room and place the tray on the table. The troll was looking down when it pass by, but she heard the troll even though not a single word came from her mouth.

“What kind of creature is this? It is the most hideous ugliest thing I have ever seen. I can’t believe the elves would bring such a dirty filthy thing into the palace”

Raven had enough, and took the troll by her arm, “First of all, I am not hideous nor dirty or filthy, and by the way have you taken a look in the mirror recently.”

The troll stopped immediately in her tracks, and was so disturbed that Raven had somehow heard her, she peed in her pants. I was told that troll can’t talk; explain why I could hear you.

The troll was now shaking besides herself, and Raven thought the poor thing was having a nervous breakdown. She then noticed scars that were on her back. Raven helped the poor thing into the nearby chair and went and got the warm milk that the troll just brought in and placed it in her hands and said, “Please drink, and take very deep breaths”.

I was told Trolls don’t talk. The Troll looked at Raven. “I am sorry”

Raven said “Again, nothing came out of your mouth but I could still hear you clear as a blue day.” “Did you just say”, “I am sorry”.

The troll nodded, “I am so very sorry, I didn’t know that you could her me.” “You are correct, Trolls don’t talk”. “Trolls only sign language.”

"I can see that now, but I am still hearing you, it must be some type of telepathy that I am having with you."

The Elves are watching our every move, and if you delay me any further they are going to become suspicious.

The troll got up and bowed, "you must be the chosen one that the legend has told us about, I must go now and tell the others."

"Wait, Wait, we need to talk more", said Raven.

"No more time left, must go now and tell the others."

Raven tried to stop the troll but the troll was too fast for her to slow down and was gone out the door in a flash.

"Boy, they do have some speed once they get their small feet moving"

She took the empty glass of milk back to the tray and picked up a chocolate chip cookie and bit into it. "So this is another strange change in events as she settles in for a night full of sleep. First I was told, trolls couldn't talk; now I know that somehow I have a gift to talk to them without sign language. What does it mean that I am the chosen one? The troll sure got upset once she realized I could hear her talking in her head."

"I am definitely not going to clean up the pee on the floor, that troll can take care of that problem herself"

Raven pulled some more blankets over herself and slowly fell into a deep sleep. Elves, Trolls, I am sure that tomorrow will be another very interesting day.

The wind was hitting a tree branch against the window that woke Raven up. It must have been mid-morning by how the light was reflecting from the window glass.

Raven went into the bathroom and there were fresh towels and a new casual outfit for her that was freshly pressed. She took a warm shower and folded up her flannel gown and put it on the bed. There were fresh flowers on the table, and a note.

Raven unfolded the note, and at first it looked completely blank. The writing started to appear in a lovely golden tone color: "I am so sorry, you are not ugly, you are the chosen one" The writing then stopped, and then the whole note exploded into silver dust that floated to the ground.

Trolls, Raven said, "You have to love them"

She opened up her bedroom door and decided to see what the new day was going to bring. She walked down the stairs and there was the Elf that was the soldier that she ate next to the evening before waiting for her. He bowed to her and asked, "If she had a nice sleep."

Raven immediately felt something strange about this Elf and that he was not there so much to welcome her but was there to control and keep an eye on her. Princess Caroline wanted me to give you her regrets, but she had some morning's items to attend to this morning, but she wanted me to show you the hospitality of our wonderful kingdom. "Are you hungry at all?" "Splendid, we have a small breakfast already prepared for you. Please follow me"

He led the way and again, he was being way too attentive and too close to be just a courtesy to a welcome honored guest. They walked out to the gardens next to the palace to a small dining area that had a view of the entire valley and river. What was strange was the lack of Trolls; she hasn't seen a single one so far? The Elf pulled the chair out for Raven, and they both sat down. There were fresh fruits, and a variety of morning breads and nuts, with glasses of orange and cranberry juice.

The elf soldier didn't eat, but told Raven to go ahead and enjoy. The elf soldier wasn't much into small talk last night and still wasn't. Raven then asked the question, "So where are the trolls". "They are more nocturnal than us Elf's, so for the most part they stay in their caves under the bridges until night fall" "Why are you so interested in the Troll's, I wouldn't think you would be much interested in such ugly little creatures that do most of the tiny chores we care very little about."

Raven, didn't want to show any type of emotional response to the elf, so she just changed the subject. The elf soldier seemed to be losing patience with all of the unnecessary small talk. He then took control of the conversation.

"So Raven, as you know we have to get you through reprocessing and we only have a small window of time to make that happen. Your window is set for this afternoon, so we don't have very much time to show you around. There is one way I can show you the kingdom with the amount of time that we have."

The soldier took out a silver flute and played three high pitch notes that Raven could barely hear.

She saw them first, and they were two of the most beautiful white horses with wings that she ever seen. They both landed right next to the garden area where they were. The Elf went to both of them, and petted their necks to calm them down.

"Beautiful creatures aren't they. These two are from my own private stable. Here let me help you get on one of them." He carefully lifted her into the saddle, and then he got into the saddle of the other one. "Have you ever ridden one", he said to Raven? "Just need to use your feet hold your hands tightly on the reins to steer, and don't pull too tight or they will buck you off and unfortunately it is a very large distance to the ground."

"Hold on tight", and they both took off at about the same time. For Raven, it was like riding horses but even more exciting with the flight of their wings. They went high above the valley into the thin clouds that were scattered in the sky. They then circles back and they flew by the palace and then back over the kingdom area with the rivers and bridges.

The soldier elf then saw some smoke in the distance. "Follow me closely; we need to check out where the smoke is coming from." The closer they came to the smoke the more it was not what Raven expected.

It wasn't smoke at all but it was a cloud of locust. There were thousands of them. The soldier said to himself, "where you find locust you will always find Giants". There they were, sitting, and arguing with each other. It reminded Raven of big time wrestling match, but more grotesque in nature.

"Normally you don't see Giants so close to the Kingdom", the soldier elf said. 'I have been told that they have the brain size of an over ripe onion" The giants didn't see Raven or the Elf, they were way too busy wrestling with each other. The bigger giant lifted the smaller one up into the air and slammed his body back into the earth and the forest next to them shook as if an earthquake just occurred.

"Where I came from, people pay good money to see this type of entertainment" While they were being distracted, Raven didn't notice a band of Trolls that had a catapult taken out of hiding with a net tied with stones. Raven nor the soldier saw the trap coming, and all of a sudden the trap was released and the nets went flying and wrapped over both of their winged horses. The flying horses couldn't stay in flight with their wings all entangled and started to free fall. As they were about to hit the ground, the smaller giant was there with outstretched hands to catch them both.

The giants then placed the captives still in the nets in front of the band of trolls. All of the trolls were jumping up and down with much joy and excitement.

The Giant's then said, "A deal is a deal, we keep the flying horses and you get the stinking Elf and whatever that other creature is"

The giants pulled the nets from the winged horses and put them carefully into their own cages that the giants had made for them. Raven and the Elf were a different story and were trying to get out of the nets while all this side activity was going on, but the trolls didn't wait for any Elf interference to their plans. The trolls quickly tied the Elf's hands as a prisoner. "Princess Caroline will pay a good ransom for this one, the head troll said to himself."

"You are all going to pay dearly for this, Trolls, the cost is going to be your heads on sticks"

Raven said, "The elves are going to send a rescue party to set us free us".

The trolls turned their attention to Raven, and they all gathered around Raven, and she was expecting the worst. But the head Troll's knelt down. As a matter of fact, they all knelt down in front of her.

Again, no words came from the trolls, but through telepathy she could hear every word: "Hail, Hail to our dear holy beloved lady, for you are the truly the chosen one that the prophecy has foretold us about."

"We are in desperate need of your help and your inner magic" "We know who you are and we have been foretold that you are going to be our champion and will help with our freedom to regain our voices and power"

"Do not be afraid of us, we will never harm you, but just the opposite, we worship the very ground you walk upon my lady."

"You must come with us, you have seen for your own eyes, how the Elves have treated us, and there is so much more you must know before you can help us."

"We must also split up; for you are right the elves will send out searching parties."

"Will you come with us, our blessed fair lady?"

Raven looked at the soldier elf, and all she could feel was scorn and hatred, while from the trolls she could only feel an intense maternal feeling as a mother would for her lost children that have recently been found.

"Yes, I will come with you", "but once we get to a safe place, you must be honest to me and tell me everything, agreed?"

Raven, heard it all at once from every one, "Our Lady, you are the chosen one, we are here to serve and honor you, and we will make sure not a single hair will be harm on your head." "But we must leave immediately; I hear the horns of the elf's already in the distance."

The Trolls quickly split up into two groups and one took the elf. One group headed back in the direction of the Kingdom to ask for a ransom for the soldier's head. Another group, containing Raven and the head troll went in the opposite direction leading into a thick forest area.

It's seemed that they had marched for miles. They then came to a small bridge over a rocky stream.

They walked under the bridge. She couldn't see any type of cave or opening. The head troll took out a wand like instrument and waved as if making some type of spell. A small wooden door opened, and they all walked in. Raven was being led by two trolls and she followed them all in. Once in the door closed, and the troll waved it's wand again and the door disappeared. There were scented candles lite and there were earth colored rugs on the ground. They then all went to a large kitchen area, and there were trolls already setting the table. There were cups of soup being poured with side pieces of bread and cheese.

Raven then notice a new troll that was at the head of the table. This one looked older than the rest and even the head troll that captured her went up to greet him and seem to give him a respectful place of honor before the rest. The old ancient troll asked Raven to take a seat next to him and to share in the breaking of a meal with his family. He then looked at Raven, "I want to thank you for coming, I know that this is a total mystery to you so far and that you have many questions, and I will explain everything at the end of the meal."

The trolls then started to have a most incredible meal. At the end, a special desert was given and the troll that handed Raven hers was the same troll from the palace the night before. "Would you like a warm glass of milk", the troll asked? Raven was delighted to see her again, "no thank you, the desert and seeing you will be special enough."

"I hope you are not angry, but I had to tell the ancient one of you being the chosen one" "I wouldn't have been able to live with myself if I didn't tell my elders."

"So, you were the one that got me in all this trouble?" "No, I am not angry, and I am glad to see that you are ok" "I told them all that you are not ugly, well at least not very much." Raven laughed, "Don't worry, I think the same of you all"

This time all the troll's started to laugh at the table. "Beauty has always been overrated", said the head troll.

The ancient one was very moved with how kind Raven was to the Troll that brought the message back to them. He saw that everyone was finished eating, and he clapped his hands, and the trolls cleaned up everything from the table.

He then asked the head Troll that was parts of the captive party to bring the book of prophesy to him. Raven got a very strange feeling when the book was put in front of the ancient one The book had rubies, sapphires, and emeralds on it. It also had a picture of a tree with all the forest animals below it. It looked very similar to the celtic tree of life.

The ancient one then told the story of prophesy that came from this book.

"It is true that trolls can't talk, and we have only slowly been able to have a type of telepathy between just the trolls through the generations. You see it is due to the dark magic of the Elves that they used to put a spell upon all of us to make us their servants. At one time, the trolls had the greater power then the elves. But with such power, came greed and the elves felt threaten and went in search of a way to bring us down and control us."

“Things were not going well for the elves until they stole a hidden book of spells from a dark witch high in the forgotten mountains. They took the book from the witch and then they didn’t hesitate to use it against us and against the witch herself. They provoke a powerful set of spells that took the very voice of each and every troll and which then made us their servants for eternity. They then locked the witch in a hidden cave for the rest of her mortal life.

“But now, here is where you fit in, and the story should have great interest to you. In the Troll’s book of prophesy, it also states that a foreign traveler would appear in our lands and would have the ability to read our thoughts. This person would be descended from Witches herself, and would be able to help reverse the spell upon us. The description is identical to you, Raven, and that is why we have such a special interest in you and hoping that you can help us to obtain our just freedom.”

“We are not asking to dominate the elves again. I can tell you that we have learned our lessons well. The trolls just want to be free, live in peace, and to have return to us the simple freedoms and dignities of our lives, community, and culture back, just like the elves have now and just be able to reverse the wrong that this terrible spell has upon us?”

“Will you help us, Raven?”

“Yes, of course I will help you with all my heart and soul in any way that I can”. The Trolls couldn’t hold their emotions in any longer and they all started crying and hugging each other. “They all went to Raven and gave her all hugs, and a thank you for being so brave and having the will and desire to help them within their time of extreme need with just having met them.”

“Boy, these trolls sure are a very emotional bunch”, she said as the group continued to celebrate Raven’s decision to help them.”

“Thank you Raven, Thank you so much, you don’t know how much this all means to us.”

“Raven, please stay with us tonight as our guest, as we finalize our next steps.”

“We are all going to have our voices back, and with your help our given agony of complete servitude will be ended and the evil past will become just another thought within the passage of time itself.”

“You truly are the chosen one”, and with that the trolls went into another state of pure ecstasy and celebration.

The Trolls got up and they all started to plan the next steps around the kitchen table.

Raven was suddenly tired, and took a seat in a chair next to a stone fireplace that had orange ambers still burning softly. She immediately felt the comfortable within the warmth of the fire, and it reminded her of some of her camping trips that she had taken with her family.

The troll that served her at the palace came to her and put a bucket of warm water. She then took Raven's boots off and started to wash her feet. She then place her feet into the bucket and Raven started to relax even more. "We are going to have to travel far to the forgotten mountains", said the small troll.

"My name is Tilley by the way, and the head's Troll's name is Toad. We called him Toad, because you can tell that he kind of looks like one." "I knew another Toad, and he was a very kind person"

"Thank you for the foot massage, Tilley", said Raven. Tillie smiled and give a slight bow. Raven just couldn't keep her eyes open any longer and she fell asleep in the chair.

Toad came by after having finalized the quest to the forgotten mountains that they would all soon take together. Toad found Raven fast asleep and he went and took a quilt and put in over her. "Curious creature", Toad said to himself, "the prophecies had better be right or they will all be caught and executed on sight." "The elves do not view a rebellion well at all."

"You got to give the elves credit on one thing; they don't waste time holding prisoners that had committed treason against the sacred kingdom.

The rest of the trolls gathered their things also and took to sleeping where they could find an empty chair or bunk. Most of them had their weapons close by at the ready just in case.

During the night, Raven had a restless sleep.

She dreamed that the Elves were hunting them all down, and that they were not Elf's at all but that they had changed to blood thirsty werewolves under the full moon. One by one, she saw the Trolls get hunted down and then it was just her, and she could hear the howling getting closer and closer. She then came to a canyon not unlike the Grand Canyon in Arizona, and the pack of werewolves were there staring at her with recent troll blood dripping from their mouths. The largest werewolf then transformed back to the solider elf, and told Raven that she need to surrender or else. He stated that her actions were for a lost cause and that the Trolls will always be their property and servants of the Elves. She then remembers, giving the elf the finger and turning and jumping off the canyon wall. She could feel a true flying sensation and right before she hit the canyon floor, she woke up with a migraine and with sweat falling from her forehead.

Tilley was next to her and was very concern. I heard you scream from the other room. Are you ok?

"I think so; I believe it was just a terrible dream"

Tilley went and got a drink of water for her. "Here take a drink you will feel better."

The Quest for Magic:

Raven was extremely impressed on how organized the trolls were and how quick that the trolls were able to get packed and assemble. Toad got in front of everyone and told everyone to stay close to each other and to be careful and to also make sure they had each other backs covered during the long adventure.

“This isn’t a fun camping trip that we are about to embark on, it is our Quest, our destiny, to save and free our people and to have the dignity of our separate culture.” Raven was still amazed how well they all could have telepathy with each other even though she did see some using sign language.

The ancient one came in front of them just when they were about to leave, and gave a sacred blessing for their trip. He wished them success and was saddened that he couldn’t go with them, but was simply too old to that the journey on the long trip that was in front of them.

Raven asked Tilley, “So the elves never knew that you could communicate with each other without speaking.”

“They are always suspicious by nature and I think they thought that we were using some type of sign language behind their backs. But the simple answer is no, the elves don’t know that we are telepathic.”
“But we want our real voices that were taken from us back, and to no longer be the silent servants to the elves” “Simple freedom and dignity, that is all that we are seeking and is all that we truly have wanted for our people”

“No longer just property, no longer under an evil wicked spell”

The trail that they took through the forest was off the normal path because they didn’t want to be seen or captured. Tilley told Raven about a vampire beetle that is about the size of a fist and will attach to a person’s jugular and drink all of your blood within minutes leaving you dead. It uses the blood within its replication process and after feeding would be able to replicate itself from just one beetle to about twenty five. They are a foe to be aware of.

Raven felt very uneasy and asked if there is anything else in the forest that she should be aware of.

Tilley just laugh and said, “Everything.” “This forest treats everything as its prey.”

Raven then saw the remains of a skeleton of what might have been a dog or a sheep. Tilley said, “you see those plants over there, we are steering a large distance from them on purpose. Those are carnivorous in nature, and would rather have you as their next meal than anything else.”

“Friendly place isn’t it” Tilley just smiled and gave Raven a stick to help with her balance while walking. “It’s just the balance of life out here”; “these organisms are like any other.” “They are just trying to stay alive and they just replicate themselves because that is how they extend their given existence.”

“Trolls have very thick skin, and that is how we have survived through the years. People don’t have a lot of expectations for us and we get by with the little that we have or can make on our own.”

Toad came walking up the ranks to make sure everyone was doing alright and make sure everyone was drinking their water to be fully hydrated. It wasn’t an exceptionally hot day, but it was one of those days that could be misleading for any outlander, and he didn’t want anyone to not be able to keep up with the group for they were making good progress towards the forbidden mountains.

Toad patted Raven on the back. “You are doing a good job, young lady. We are so happy that you are with us. We are making good time and we will take a short break in a little bit.”

A bright color beetle flew up next to Raven, and she yelled. Toad looked at Raven as if she had just lost her entire mind. Tilley started laughing. “Tilley said there were vampire beetles in the forest.”

Toad just shook his head. “Tilley shouldn’t have put fear into you head” “It is true that there is a myth about this vampire beetle, but what just flew up next to you was just a common blue beetle, not one of the vampires.”

The Mushroom Trail:

As they kept on walking, the forest started to open up with giant mushrooms with different color polka dots. Raven thought they were walking into a fantasy land. Tilley seemed less sure and seemed a little bit more nervous than before.

“Tilley, aren’t these the most beautiful mushrooms that you have ever seen”

Tilley nodded, but still had a very serious look on her face. The grass seemed a little bit stickier than usually as if there was a thin mud now on the surface.

“During the cold winter months, I use to slide on an ice pond that was next to our neighbor park.”

“Tilley, look at this”, and Raven took a few step and then slid about ten feet. She then took a few more slides.

The psychedelic mushroom also seems to be illuminated while transmitting a bright inner light. They all stopped at a small grove area that had mushroom in the form of chairs and tables, so they all sat down as if they were all at an outdoor Paris café.

“So Tilley, do you know what they called this place.”

Tilley nodded, “it’s called the Mushroom trail and it leads for a few miles to the other side of the glen.” We don’t go traveling much to the other side of the grove because there are many stories of Trolls going through the mushroom trail and never coming back.”

“Well, it is looks very harmless to me, Tilley” “Looks can be very misleading, raven” “Look at that lizard on that mushroom; you see how it blends into the background.” “That specific lizard maybe harmless, but you never know what is right behind the corner in total disguise”

“Tilley, you are absolutely right”, said Toad “We must always be on our guard, for the journey is long and the fates may not always be on our side”

“Ok, nap time is up people, time to get up and let’s keep on going.” The trolls all got off their mushroom stools and they continue to press on down through the mushroom trail together.

Raven continues to slide as it was helping her save her energy and it was more fun than just walking. She then tripped and fell right in front of her, Tilley, just stared and burst into laughter. “That sure was graceful” “Don’t every lecture me on gracefulness”

Tilley just shook her head and stepped right over her.

“Remember what Toad said, Nap time is over”

They came to the end of the mushroom area, and there was an opening of a cave in front of them. The trolls in front of them were starting to behave very strangely; it was as if they were drunk. There was something glowing in the cave, and it seemed to be having an intoxication effect on all of the trolls.

Tilley could tell that something was deadly wrong, and tried to warn them, but it was too late, even Toad entered the cave acting like a school girl with over active hormones in love.

It was even too strong for both, Raven and Tilley. They both were about to enter into the cave themselves, until a large centipede came from out of the slim itself, and wrapped around their feet making them fall just a few feet in front of the cave.

When they hit the ground, the cave's mouth closed sharply, and two large eyes were now staring right at them.

It was a cave mammoth. Tilley had heard about them. Cave mammoth lure their victims into their mouths pretending to be a cave. They reminded Raven a lot like rock fishes in the ocean waiting for an unexpected meal to swim by while pretending to be just a rock.

Tilley was in total shock, and they could even hear the screams of all the trolls inside the mammoth's mouth being crunched upon and eaten for its lunch. There was a large burb by the cave mammoth, and a bunch of troll bones flew out of the cave mammoth's mouth.

The centipede release them, and said, "Ladies, you both can thank me later for saving your lives"

"I normally don't interfere with old cave mammoth here, but I saw how young you two were, and I just couldn't let old cave mammoth take you also" "You see I am a family man myself" "A real softy, my little girl's tell me."

"Now you two girls, take off and get going, that path there will lead you safely around the cave mammoth. I am truly sorry for you traveling companions, but someone's lunch is usually someone's offspring." "Most people don't understand that" "I am a vegetarian myself, but that mammoth is a 100% meat eater."

"Off with you now, before you give the cave mammoth another chance with you"

Both Tilley and Raven didn't hesitate, but ran as fast as they could down the path that took them safely around the cave mammoth.

Out of breath, Tilly was still shaking and Raven was trying to calm her down.

Tilley started to cry uncontrollably and as her tears touched the ground, white daisy's appeared. Soon they were both knee deep in daisies.

“Tilley, Tilley, I am so sorry. I am so very sorry.” “They are all dead, raven. Everyone last of them. I should have died with them. You and me both, if it wasn’t for that Good Samaritan centipede, we would be cave chips right now just like old Toad and all of the others.”

“Tilley, I know how you feel, I have lost close friends and relatives that are close to me also unexpectedly recently” “There is never a good rhyme or reason, but the best way for us to honor them is to finish this quest to the forbidden mountains, to find this evil witch, and get this spell broken to bring back the dignity for all of your people”

Tilley nodded, but they were now it will be a very big challenge for them, not only physical but emotionally.

Helping Hands:

Raven saw a real cave, but decided to sleep under a large illuminated mushroom. I am not taking any chances, and Tilly lay next to her as they fell to sleep in a patch full of mushrooms and friendly centipedes.

“Tomorrow is another day” “It may be our last or it may just be just another day on our path towards freedom for your people.”

As they fell asleep, a comet crosses the sky above. They woke up early, and there were small presents that had been left next to them during the night, with trails of centipedes next to them.

Raven and Tilley both smiled.

Raven said, “those centipedes are very busy beavers aren’t they.”

Tilley looked at Raven, “What is a beaver?” Raven just laughed, “A furry little animal that spends all of its time, night and day building wooden dams.”

They both open up their presents, and each had a loaf of bread and what looked and taste like cheese. “Those centipedes are little baker’s too, I tell you, what talented and considerate insects they are.”

They ate their meals. They both were still grieving so little was spoken as they started together down the path.

“So Tilley, it’s up to you now? Seriously, do you want to go back to the Elf Kingdom, or continue our quest? I won’t judge you either way.”

“Raven, I know the odds are against us, but us trolls, we can’t be property any further, and we must have our real voices back.” “So we must go on and whatever we face we will be brave and face them together”, and so they continue down the path that eventually took the out of the Mushroom trail.

It wasn’t very long until they met another obstacle, and this one was a legal one. There at the side of the trail was a very large tortoise. He was wearing a ranger hat like you would see while vesting at one of the National Forest Parks. “Permits please, you must have a permit to visit the forest.”

Tilley said, “I don’t need a permit, I am a troll and troll are exempt from any regulations.”

The tortoise stated that he was fully aware of the regulation but regardless if you are a troll or not, you still have to go and get a permit. He then pointed to a guard station and said you still have to sign in, no one is allowed to go into the forbidden mountains without a permit.

Tilley was beside herself while whispering in Raven's ear, "This is ridiculous, I am a troll and trolls don't need permits period. If we go and sign in at the station, the elves will know at once exactly where we are and there may even be a special alert out for us already which mean that they could just hold us indefinitely in a holding cell, and notify the elves to come and pick us up."

The tortoise was still staring at the two of them as if to dare them not to get permits and try to get past him. Tilley took Raven's arm and pulled her as if they were going to the ranger's station for the permits. "We can't get caught, nor can we get permits, there has to be another option."

A pizza delivery car came into the park area, and parked near the station. There was a small porcupine with a funny hat that jumped out of the car and had two large deluxe pizzas to be delivered. He left the trunk open. Tilly said to raven we need to be a stole away in the trunk and hope the next delivery will be far enough into the foothills. So while the porcupine was busy delivering the pizzas, they slide into the back of the trunk and closed it so it looked like it has already been shut.

The porcupine came back and slid into the front driver seat and put the pizza warmer carrying case on the vacant seat. He saw the trunk was closed, and thought the wind must have just closed it for him, in either case he just need to get back so he can do the next delivery. A porcupine with a purpose with a pizza was his daily motto, PP&P. Money was good and pizzas don't do any harm to folks.

The drive to the pizza shop was bumpier than expected, and as the porcupine drove up to the shop, both Raven and Tilly got out without being noticed. It was the only pizza restaurant in the entire forest area, and they were doing a very brisk business.

Tilley heard some yelling towards the porcupine, that the individual doing the yelling couldn't believe that the pie maker wasn't able to make it for the second sift. Who was going to make all of the pizzas for the afternoon deliveries?

Tilley told Raven to hide behind the gas storage unit. She then went into the restraint and said that she heard the conversation and that she knew how to make excellent pizza pie. She then offered her service for the afternoon shift for return of just a couple of pies. The owner couldn't believe what strokes of luck he was having for trolls were famous for their pizzas.

After the shift, Tilley was given two pizza's pies and gave one to raven.

They both eat their pies and Raven said it was the best she had ever had.

They decided to wait until night before they started on their journey again to the forbidden mountains.

As the night closed in and the day ended, they started out again under a sky blanketed with stars and wonderment.

The moon itself looked alike a large pizza pie, raven thought it must be a good omen.

Tilley and raven walked in silence for a while as the night closed in and darkness surround them. There was a night chill in the air, and raven put on the jacket that she was carrying. They were now in the foot hills and on the distance hill, they say thousands of small circles of lights moving on the ground.

They then came upon an official sign that read, Hands sanctuary, do not feed or approach.

Raven looked at Tilley, Hand's sanctuary? "What are Hands?" Raven then said, "Let's go ahead and find out."

There was a barricade with a gate that was locked, but they saw a small drainage pipe that had a loose screen. They opened up the loose screen, and they both then crawled through the drainage pipe opening. They made sure the screen was put back in place so it looked like no one had mess with it before they moved on towards the flashing lights.

Walking carefully, they walked in the direction of the circles of light on the hill side. When they got closer, they could see the outline of these unique little strange animals. They were like penguins, but instead of eyes or a beak, there was a small mouth with a hand coming out of the forehead. The hand had some type of fluorescent light affect.

What the hands were doing very effectively and also single mindedly was turning over the rocks on the hillside, and finding small grub worms that they then picked up and put in their mouths to eat. Because they didn't have any eyes, they were always bumping into each other, but they all seemed very polite about it by patting each other's heads and shaking hands when a bump did occur.

Tilley said, I heard about these hands before. I heard that they populate like rabbits, and that is why a sanctuary had to be built, or else they would override the entire country with hands. A curious hand came up in front of them and stated to wave as if to greet them.

Raven waved which she soon regretted because she then had hundreds of hands surrounding her and they were all pulling at her leg. She was about to lose her balance when Tilly started to kick the hands off of her.

"Keep your dirty hands off her", Tilley yelled at them. The hands then all scattered in different directions and were soon back picking up rocks and eating worms from the hillside. There was one hand that stood in defiance and gave the middle finger to them.

"Well, that isn't very friendly or neighborly of you isn't"

"Just don't gesture back, if they freaked out with a wave, I can just imagine what they do if you flipped them off."

"Well, let's get going, its look like there is no helping hand here anyway."

"You are so right sister, so right indeed."

"So let's get going."

They went back to the same drainage pipe that they came through the first time. Raven felt like it was a tighter squeeze this time for her entire body to get through.

Raven was brushing the dirt from her pants and Tilley was just coming out of the drainage pipe herself, when a large flashlight was then waved directly at them. Believe it or not, there he was, Ranger Tortoise standing in front of them. "Don't either of you move or else,"

"You are trespassing and in violation of the Hand's sanctuary regulations, you are so lucky they didn't kill you, and only flipped you off. They look harmless, but they will tickle you to death in a minute"

Tortoise was waving his flashlight in a very dramatic way, and was so focus on the trespasser's that he didn't realize that Tilley didn't have time to put the screen lid back on the drainage pipe.

It seems like a thousand of hands came out of the drainage pipe at once. They didn't seem to be interested in either Raven or Tilley this time, but were attracted only to the Tortoise and his waiving flashing light. In seconds, the tortoise was thrown back onto its shell, and it immediately retracted its head and limbs into its shell. The hands then started to roll the tortoise shell down the foothills back towards the mushroom trail while throwing the flashlight into the air like a bouncing beach ball.

While all this was happening, Raven and Tilley ran in the opposite direction. Those hands are going to keep Ranger Tortoise busy for a few days. We still need to get as much distance that we can from him.

As they got further up the terrain, the trees started to change into ponderosa pines and evergreens.

" We are getting into the highlands now, so we are getting closer to our destination of the forbidden mountains", said Tilley.

The Highlands:

They found some soft needles to make small beds under the pines. They both look at the stars and Tilley was the first one to speak.

“Raven, do you think Toad is somewhere up there in the stars and is still looking out for us” Raven was careful with her words wanting to give Tilley some comfort, but also not wanting to feed into her grief.

“I am sure he is Tilley, I know how important he was to you”

“He was like a father to me, you know he took care of me when I was an orphan and had no other place to go” “She then took out a large piece of cloth from her jacket and blew her nose that sounded more like a trumpet”

“Now I am sure that got Toad’s attention way up there on that star if anything could.”

“Tilley laugh, but Raven could still hear her grieving coming through soon afterwards. Trolls are so sensitive, even though by looking at them they come across as thick skinned. Once asleep, they both slept peacefully and soundly as the sunrise awoke the pines upon a new day.

A large pinecone fell from the tree and hit Raven on the head and woke her up. Just like Isaac newton and the apple, she thought to herself.

She then started to get a very strange feelings, it seems that all she could do was to think about Jason, and the time she saw him surfing in his tight wet suit. She was getting butterflies in her stomach again, and she wanted to find him and just tear his bathing suit off. “Boy, I have had lustful moments before, but this is going to the next extreme.”

She then heard the sound of a stream nearby and decided it would be good idea to go cool off and to also clean up from their encounter with the helping hands. Raven found the stream and it was about twelve feet wide and about a foot deep. She filled her water bottle with water and then washed her hair. She then saw the reflection in the water and it was an image that she wasn’t expected to see for at least many years into the future. It was as if she aged fifty years. She then ran to find Tilley, and Tilley was not back at the campsite.

“What is happening to me? why have I aged fifty year in just one night.? Is this just another witch’s spell?”

The pinecone that had hit her head was no longer a seed but was now a full size tree.

There must have been some type of magic in this pine forest that accelerates growth. Raven decided not to wait and find out that it would be better for her to go at once.

“Hey wait for me”

She then heard her name yelled out, and she looked in all directions, and couldn't see where it was coming from. She then looked up to the top of the new sprouted pine tree, and there was Tilley waving at her.

“I am up here, the tree when it sprouted carry me and my blanket to the top of the forest while I was asleep.” I will be down in a minute, and she started coming down the tree swinging on the limbs like a regular chimpanzee.

“Boy, what happen to you last night”, Raven frown, I don't know, I know we escaped from the helping hands last night, and then we came into the pine forest and then the pinecone dropped from the tree on my head, and here we are.”

This must be the Pining Forest of the Highlands”

“I have heard about it. The story goes if you touch a pinecone in anyway; it causes you to pine for the future and for the past. That is why Trolls are forbidden to come here at all”

“Us trolls, you know how we are? We do have to take care of our natural beauty and all”

“So how do we take care of this little problem Tilley?”

“I can't be fifty, I just turned sixteen just recently.” I am also so Horny, the pine trees themselves are starting to look good to me”

“I feel like I am on sexual overdrive, now I know how a nymphomaniac feels like on Spring break in Mexico.”

Tilley started to laugh, “boy that pinecone must had some strong potion to make you as loony as you are speaking now.” “I even better hide the bananas and the zucchini from your sex driven paws.”

“This isn't funny Tilley, there has to be some type of medicine to help me” Tilley smile and said well “there is a wild blue berry that supposed to break the spell that you are under”.

“Where are these blue berries?”

“They grow where the hawks live on the edge of the cliffs in the distance there. We have to be careful, because they don't like their territory to be invaded into.”

“Well let's go, we may be able to get there quickly and we can turn me back to normal.”

“Tilley, has anyone ever say how sexy you are, and she started to play with Tilley's hair”

Tilley pushed Raven away. “You are mad, you just made a pass on a Troll, and you do have it bad”

They packed up their bags and off they went to find the blue berries and hopefully not a territorial hawk. They found a trail headed back in that direction and Tilley gave her a piece of pine bark to chew on.

“Now this will not take the spell away like the wild blue berries will, but it will reduce your hormones down just a bit. It acts like a chemical blocker, so you won’t go chasing after any poor creature that may cross your path.”

They walked together, and the bark seemed to calm Raven down a bit so she was a little more like her old self. They came to a clearing, and there a circle, and there was a man that looks just like Albert Einstein standing in the middle. He had a stick and he wrote $E=MC^2$ on the sand. The wind then came up and washed the letters away. He then took the stick and wrote the same letters and symbols again. Once again the wind comes up, and washed the words away. He then wrote the words again, but this time he spoke to Tilley and Raven.

“Greetings, you may be wondering what I am doing. Some would say it is penance, other would say it just isn’t relative, both wouldn’t both be right, don’t you think.”

There was an empty bench outside of the circle where Einstein was standing in.

“Please take a seat and talk to me, it has been a long time since I had an actual visitor”, as his shaggy white hair and mustache was blowing in the wind. Raven nodded and was thankful to sit down for her back was starting to hurt from all of their walking. She wasn’t as young as she used to be you know.

I now know now how my mother and father are feeling with mature age. Raven was still chewing on the bark like bubble gum; even so old Einstein was looking attractive to her.

“We can only stay for a short time, for I need to have these wild blue berries to solve my medication condition.”

“I am sorry you are not feeling well”, as he just finished writing $E=mc^2$ again and the wind came up and shuffle the sand making it disappear again.

“But maybe I can help you. Let me walk you through a visualization meditation exercise.

“I first want you both to put your hands together in front of you. I then want you to imagine what these wild blue berries look like. Now, I want you visualize the wild blue berries are starting to appear in your hands spontaneously.”

Raven tried, but nothing happen. She stared at her hands and then at Albert again. Still nothing, Tilley on the other hand, wild berries started to appear immediately.

Tilley said “I have never done anything like this before”, this is amazing, and this must be some type of Magic!

“It’s not magic, Tilley, it’s just relativity at work.”

Tilley said, "Quickly Raven go ahead and eat just seven wild blue berries, and not one more, nor one less." Raven picked seven of the most delicious looking ones, and then started to eat them all in a row. Once done, she started to shake as if she was overcome by the Holy Spirit itself. She then collapsed on to the ground. When she awoke, it was night time and she was next to a fire with glowing amber of fire that had once burned.

There was Tilley looking at her, "Are you ok".

"I think I am, how do I look am I sixteen again?"

"Raven you are back looking sweet sixteen once again."

"Thank be to God", Raven said. "I am not ready for fifty yet, not that there is anything wrong being fifty."

"I know what you mean Raven, it's nice to be back to what is normal again"

"I guess you know the feeling that us trolls are looking for, we too just want to be normal again and to have our actual voices back to speak again." "We don't want anything more and nothing less."

Raven took her hand, "there is nothing in the world that I would rather to see then to hear your voice, Tilley and to break the spell that has bind your people to servitude to the elf kingdom."

"So I must have blacked out when I took the blue berries" Tilley nodded, and then told her that she carried her for a while and then decided to set-up a camp and a fire for tomorrow will be another day and she didn't want to set-up camp in the dark.

"Thanks' Tilley for your help today, and I hope I wasn't an embarrassment to you."

"I am just glad we got you the medicine that you needed, for if the giants would have found you in that condition, well, I would probably be a godmother of your giant babies in about eighteen months."

Raven fell asleep, but before she did, she put an extra blanket over her head just in case another darn pinecone falls from the pines. "I am not going to go through that again."

"I still can't believe it, I met Albert Einstein."

Morning broke again though scattered clouds, and Tilley was cooking some morning eggs. "Good morning" 'So the adventure begins again" "We have gone through too much to turn back." They packed up camp and started towards the forbidden mountain.

"So why do you think there is always a mountain for a given quests?" "It may have started when there was gold up in the mountains or may be mountains look majestic and are always some mystery with them within the passing of the clouds."

“Well, it may be because of Moses” “Who was Moses?”

“Well, it’s a long story, but Tilley if you met him, you would like him. He took his people out of slavery and into the promise land of milk and honey.”

“Just like we are doing?”

“Right on, Sister Troll” “Just like what we are doing” Raven spirit seem to be lifted with the imagination that they were walking the same holy path as Moses had. Wonder is they will run into a burning bush, or manna falling from heaven above.

They were now out of the pine forest and were more in the upper grasslands leading towards the forbidden mountains. They didn’t see any threatening hawks, so they felt like they had pass through their territory without any confrontation. The journey had made Raven feel more sensitive about how precious life was and that no one should be without their basic freedom and dignity or rights.

“The truth is greater than both of us Tilley, and we were brought together for a higher purpose. You and I are going to rock this Elf kingdom together.”

They came to a clearing and there was a young maiden with golden hair that was dresses in armor mesh clothing and was sharpening the blade of her sword. She seemed very self-occupied and didn’t seem to at first notice Tilley and Raven approach. It was her horse that first made the sound due to their approaching towards her.

She kept on sharpening her blade and seems to not even want to make eye contact with the travelers. She then slammed the sword into the ground and it was as if an earthquake occurred, making both Raven and Tilley lose their balance. She was quickly on top of Tilley with her sword ready to slice her neck.

“Stop, please stop, we are not your enemy, said Raven.”

She looked at Raven, and then took her blade away from Tilley’s throat and put it back into the leather pouch on her back.

“It looks to me that you are on a holy quest; I know a few things about holy quests. Some are good, some are not, and it all depends on the quality of your company and the holiness of your final destiny”

As she was speaking, Raven looked at this individual more closely, and saw how familiar and how so much French she seems to be. There also seem to be almost like a golden halo around her head and her aura was the most beautiful that she had ever seen.

My friends call me, "The Maid of Orleans". “You can just simply call me Joan”

”My God, you are, Joan of Arc”

“Tilley this is a famous warrior and Saint that we are talking to. But you are dead. You were burned at the stake as a witch.”

“I may be dead, but I can assure you that right now all of my organs are performing to their maximum Saint levels, thank you very much.” You are so beautiful, I saw pictures of you in history books and if I may say that you are more beautiful and noble in person.”

“I see I will take that as a kindly compliment”

“So this quest, is it a noble one?”

Raven explained everything to Joan. Joan threw her hair back and laughed while patting Tilly on the back. “This is a noble quest, just as the French were being oppressed, we shall fight for the true freedom of the trolls. We shall all go on this quest together.”

“Just like the three musketeers, all for one and one for all”

Joan looked at Tilley and shrugged her shoulders, “The three musketeers it is then.”

We are going to find this witch and get this spell broken.

They all started together, the three of them making a very strange trinity that of a Troll, A Teenager and a Saint from a golden age of long ago.

They were now dimbing a mountain within the forbidden mountains, they decided to rest and to sleep the night so they could be fresh the next morning to make the final dimb to the cave of the Witch. Tilley was looking nervous again knowing that her story was about to end and wasn't quite sure what the writing of the signs were going to be for her. Raven tried to calm her down, explaining that they can only do their best, and they have to finish the quest regardless of what the final outcome is going to be.” It is so hard, being a Troll, as she finally drifted off to sleep.”

“It's going to be alright Tilley; it can't be any worst can it. You don't want to be a slave anymore, so we have to be brave and press on into the unknown.

The Number 3:

So they woke up together all about the same time when they heard a rustling noise outside of their camp site. Joan grasp her sword and Raven grasp her walking stick, and Tilley grasp herself not wanting any part of what was outside of their tent.

There was a large hawk outside that had tears running down its face as it flapped its broken wing. It was rolling on the ground in extreme pain.

Raven said, "Pigeon killers, Joan kill that thing, before it kills us"

"Well, aren't we the little judgment girl in the park"

Joan was surprised with how much hatred was spilling out of Raven.

Joan said, "I have killed too many people in my life time as a saint, I am vowed never to kill again without a just call"

"Ok, fine, just fine" "My two pigeon friends were killed by hawks"

"I am very sorry to hear that, but do you know for certain if this hawk was one of them that took your friends lives, and also did you know that hawks have to feed or else they too would die"

Joan went up to the hawk and saw that there was a tumor on its wing.

"Please kill me, kind maiden" "I am in so much pain and I can no longer fly"

Joan said, "Please stay very still for a moment" She then took her broad sword and sliced the tumor open. It wasn't a tumor at all, but was a moth parasite. A beautiful yellow moth crawled out and spread its wings. The hawk was very grateful, and the moth too was so extremely happy to be set free.

"Thank you maiden", said the moth. "It was getting a little uncomfortable in there. The hawk was a pleasant enough host, but it is time to go. It was not my intent to be in there for so long, and to have caused you so much pain."

"No hard feelings then?" the moth said to the hawk

The moth was then back in the air and on its way again to start the next cycle of life again. The hawk felt very vulnerable now and didn't know what Raven or Joan was going to do next.

"Relax, hawk" In a few hours, you will be back to your old hunting self.

"Thank you again, kind maiden" "Raven, let's pack up and get going, we still have a quest to finish"

"You are just going to let this hawk go" "Yes, it has done no harm to us, and isn't it our karma to help those in need."

“Boy, you truly are a saint” “You don’t have to be a saint, to have forgiveness and love to a stranger in need”

They then heard Tilley’s voice from her tent “Is it ok now to come out?”

“Yes Tilley, it is ok to come out” “Stop laughing, as she crawled out still holding on to her pillow” They packed up their bags, and Joan asked the hawk if it needed anything before they left. The parasitic tumor was already well on its way of being healed.

“Give it a few more hours, hawk, and you should be able to fly again.”

The hawk bow to Joan in reverence, and they were then off the three of them. “All for one, and one for all”, Raven said to herself.

The weather was changing a little, it has been very pleasant while traveling in the pine forest and the highlands, but now it was changing for the worst. Raven even noticed even an occasion snow flake starting to fall. They all had their heavier jackets on and the weather didn’t seem to slow them down at all.

The terrain was becoming less pines and less vegetation. They were going up switch back trails that were getting more and more difficult to climb. Raven thought she was in pretty good shape, but she was starting to feel the muscle strain in her calf muscles.

Tilley saw raven starting to limp a little bit. “What is wrong, should we rest.”

“What’s wrong?” Joan said while staring at the two of them with concern.

“It’s Raven, she started to limp, and she may have strain a muscle” “Looks like there is a small mesa around the corner higher in the canyon”, and she pointed with her sword.

“Do you think, you can make it a little bit further today” Raven didn’t want to feel like a third wheel, so she said she would be fine, so they made the final push together up to the small mesa area that overlooked a majestic canyon below.

“This is more beautiful than the grand canyon” It was cold though as there was nothing blocking the cold northern wind that was blowing across the mesa. They had a small dinner, and they decided to put the tents inside of each other for better insulation from the cold. They were also able to be heated off of each other body heat. “This is cozy”, Raven said.

“Nobody snores do they” Tilley rubbed her nose and didn’t say a word. It was the worst sleep Raven ever had. Trolls, boy do they snore. But the snoring didn’t seem to affect Joan at all. Raven woke the others up; she was told not to let them sleep too far in. “So where do we travel from here”, Raven said to Joan.

But Joan didn't respond back. Raven then notice that Joan had cotton in her ears. Joan took the cotton out.

"What were you saying?" "Never mind" and she walked out of the tent and let the other get prepare for the new day. There was a fresh layer of snow on the ground, about an inch or so.

The camping site was even more beautiful in the morning than the night before with the fresh new winter carpet on the mesa.

"It is simply breathtaking" Tilley was now beside Raven looking at the brand new morning before them. Well, let's gather our things. I have a feeling that today is going to be the day we get your freedom back.

Joan threw a couple of biscuits to them. "We can't finish this quest on an empty stomach can we" They had some biscuits and tea together, and then they were off again. The trail ended and now they were making their own trail up the final height of the mountain. Raven kept on slipping and falling and she started to feel blood dripping on her leg underneath her black jeans. The last time, Joan had to help her up and dusted the snow off her.

"Girlfriend, you are going to kill yourself even before we get to our final destination" Tilley had an idea, and she made some snow shoes out of vines that were on the canyon wall to help give Raven some additional traction. This is an old trick that Toad taught me when we went snowshoe walking ourselves.

"You see, Toad is still with us and still helping, Tilley"

Joan said who is Toad? Tilley then told the story of Toad and the cave mammoth. "I have heard of this cave mammoth before" "It makes you aware that every second of our lives are sacred and precious."

They were now making very good time and they made it to the very top of the mountain. The snow was now coming down in sheets, and there was an Elf flag planted on the ground.

"Why is there always a flag at the top of every mountain?"

"The mountain belongs to no one, and it has to be prideful to think that just by sticking your big pole into a fertile ground makes it's yours."

"I am so very surprise it is an Elf Kingdom flag"

They all then looked around and what surprise them was there wasn't anything at all on the top of the mountain, just the blowing snow and the flag.

Tilley then heard a voice; "the flag must be broken before the spell can be release".

Tilley then looked at the two others and said, I know what needs to be done" She went to the flag pull and tried to pull the flag out. It was too slippery and cold.

She wasn't able to make the flag move an inch.

Joan looked at Raven and said, "She isn't going to be able to do this by herself." So they all three now were pulling with all of their might. The flag remain firmly in the ground, just like merlin's sword in the stone.

"Boy this is harder than you think". They then felt a gentle wind from above that pushed all of the snow from where they were standing. It was the moth, and once it touched the ground by the flag pole

It turned into a beautiful witch with a white gown and holding a pure golden scepter.

"Greetings, you had done me a great favor when Joan released me from the grasp of tumor on the hawk."

"For it was the elf's that but me into the dark cave of the tumor on the hawk's wing. I have been locked there for hundreds of years. It will now be my sacred honor to break the elf's spell on the trolls. She took her golden scepter and touched the Elf's flag on top of the mountain. The mountain shook and the flag tore in half as the flag pole broke in half."

The witch then looked at Tilley and she was on the ground holding her face as she was shaking beside of herself.

"Stand Tilley, and let's have a look at you."

She stood, and she still had the look of a troll. "Speak Tilley"

"Please speak to us." She took her hands off her face,

"Thank you, Thank you so much" and she could hear the words coming from her voice for the very first time. Her voice was that of a beautiful Troll princess.

Raven couldn't believe it. "You have a beautiful voice Tilley, Don't every let anyone take it away your voice from you again."

"Your people are free now, and they are going to need a leader Tilley now that Toad is gone"

"The Elves have no power over you any longer, neither over you, nor over me."

"I must leave now, happy journey to you all." The witch then transformed back into the moth and flew away back down the mountain.

"This is a quest to remember for the decades", Joan shouted emotionally out loud.

Tilley was still trying to come to grip with everything that just happened to her. Raven gave Tilley a hug, "you don't have to have all the answers Tilley, just the wisdom to know who you really are and the new voice to transform this world for the better."

They then all headed back down the mountain, The Three musketeers, Raven thought to herself. "All for one and one for all"

Once they got to the bottom of the mountain, it was just one large celebration. The other trolls were there waiting for our arrival and they lifted Tilley up into the air as if she was on a trampoline.

The other trolls told Tilley what happen when the spell was broken and all of the Elf's were taken aback that they had lost all of their magical power over them.

"We must gather our forces and take over the lands that they had stolen from us." The crowd took on a mean spirit and shouted revenge for the trolls, revenge for the trolls.

Tilley found a piece of higher ground that she could speak from to her comrades of trolls. Tilley began to speak, and the crowd became quiet at once. Her voice had the power of royalty.

"Listen to me now, we are not going to take revenge, if anything the elf's need our compassion for if we use violence then we are not any better than the elf's were themselves. We have our voices back and we have our true nature back, and that is the biggest revenge of all."

"I agree that things will need to be changed, but through a community of love and caring, and not one of power, lust, and greed. But today, we need to celebrate and tomorrow we will talk to the elves about our demands for true freedom is ours for today, for tomorrow, and forevermore.

The crowd applauded and the celebration continued into the night with torches being lite for light and warmth from the winter's night. Raven found Tilley and she never seen her so vibrant, lovely and alive.

"Tilley, this is your time and your people's time. I am going to continue on with my personal joumey and I am not sure where it is going to take me, but I know that what we have experience together today will forever change me."

"Take care of yourself Tilley", and she gave her a big hug, and then she turned and Joan was now looking at her. "Raven, where do you think you are going to go?"

"I don't know, but being here during the celebration has just reinforced my missing of my own people and my own family."

Joan said, "I fully understand, you need to be with your tribe with your nation" "Thank you for letting me be a part of your quest. It has been an honor to serve and be with you"

"No, thank you Joan" I have always know that you were a kindred soul of mine and a patron saint of God's almighty army of Angels.

Raven bowed to both of them, "Now this is not a goodbye to either of you for I am sure that our paths will cross again."

Raven threw her backpack and started down the road leading away from the celebration. She found a nice clearing to setup camp. She made a camp fire to help keep warm and she slowly fell asleep." I don't know what tomorrow will bring, but I do know one thing, and that is today was a very good day."

It's All Relative:

She woke up early and packed everything up, and off she went. She decided to go back to the clearing where she met Einstein. Maybe he knows where her travels are going to take her next.

It took her most of the day to get back to the clearing where she met him for the first time. There was a circle, and a stick, but no Einstein.

"Well it's all relative, she laughed to herself?"

"Relative in deed", she heard a familiar voice and at the same time she smelled the perfume of Butterscotch.

Raven turned around, and sitting on the wooden bench was her old sweet granny, her beloved granny, Rebecca.

"Rebecca, Is that really you?" "The one and only, Raven, I have never left you and have been by your side every step of the way. But you are dead? Granny, you died when I was five. Yes my dear, my body died but not my spirit, my spirit is what I mean by always being with you. You have your mother hair and eyes. I know these past few weeks haven't been easy for you, but what you have done for Tilley means more then you will ever know for an entire culture, and it was your strength and your spirit that enable her to finish her quest."

Raven looked seriously at Granny. "Granny, does this mean that I am dead too?"

"Yes, my dear, you are dead, but as old Einstein said himself, all things are relative to each other."

At that exact minute a bright light tunnel opened up where the circle and the stick were.

"Raven, my sweet, sweet Raven, your mother, my daughter, is waiting for you on the other side, and this time I promise you this tunnel will take you back home again."

"You see the day that you went job hunting by yourself, it had rain the night before and the streets were very slippery. Do you remember? When you finish eating you yogurt cone, and you notice that black crow that flew to the antique shop sign across the street, you then cross the street. You slipped and fell and then the car came over the hill that couldn't stop in time."

"It wasn't your fault Raven, it was just an accident. A terrible accident."

"So you are saying that I never made it to the Antique shop and never met Holly."

"I am so sorry Raven, but what I am saying is the truth, everything since the accident has been a self-induced coma that the doctor's put you under so your brain might have a chance to recover from your injuries."

The tunnel was getting brighter and brighter, and started to spin.

Raven took Granny's hand in hers.

"So Granny, what you are saying to me is true? I just have to go through that tunnel and will be back home again."

"But Granny, what about you? Are you going to be alright without me?"

"Raven, my dear, remember, I am spirit and regardless if you walk through that tunnel or not, I will always be by your side. If it will help Raven, I have been told that I can walk through the tunnel with you if you are afraid in any way and would like my company."

"Me afraid, I am fearless, Granny, just like you"

"It is time Raven, have you made your decision my dear?"

"Granny, I love you, but I need to go home and be with mom and dad."

"Decision made, so that wasn't too hard was it my lovely granddaughter." "Let me walk with you through the tunnel," "Please tell your mom and dad that I am alright and that I love them dearly and always will love them."

They both got up at the same time from the bench and they started walking toward the tunnel. The closer they got the more the entrance was spinning. They stepped into the tunnel together, and Raven thought her body was somehow was going to start spinning, but instead beautiful marble steps appeared and she started to walk the steps towards home. She wanted to see what the tunnel was made out of so she reached her hand out and it was like it was some type of membrane and it took form around her hand and gently pushed it out again.

It didn't take long until they were at the end of the tunnel, and there she was back in a hospital ward with machines attached to her. She turned to granny, now this time, its real?

Granny gave her a kiss and a huge hug. "It's as real as it gets, witches honor"

"Raven, I know I am not supposed to tell you this, but you are going to have a beautiful wonderful amazing life."

They hugged one last time, and Raven stepped through the tunnel and she felt her entire soul snap back into her body with the force of a boxer who just won a hard prize fight.

She could feel the pain through every inch of her entire head and body, but she knew that she was back in her body and back home at last.

She opened up her eyes, and there was Jason and her mother crying and yelling at the same time, "It's a miracle, she's alive, I can't believe it! She's alive!"

The End

The Oddities of Predictions:

2014

Earthquake: A new fault line appears in the Midwest, Chicago area. Many will feel the new tremor.

Orange juice prices will be high do to a late freeze. There will also be gas shortages and rationing.

Climate Change: In fall of 2013, Tornadoes in the deep south, increase concerns of Global warming.

Politics: Radiation concerns, Iranian missile attacks, Cloud over Tehran. A City under confusion.

Israel's involvement of silencing a priest, broken glass times one within a distant time.

The remembrance of lost and vow of never again.

Korea still on edge. Wanting an agreement and not war. Difficult agreement offered.

Pretending to be a paper lion torn to shreds by internal turmoil and power struggle.

China will keep the peace and will have to intervene with a common purpose within their own given time and agenda.

US struggling to meet its commitments overseas and danger of being over extended.

Domestic recovery still sluggish.

Past our prime, Middle class gone. The Rich get Richer. Everything will cost more.

Health care rocketed with limited choice.

A Queen: Queen of England will pass due to an unexpected illness with complicated heart issues.

It will be her time. A grieving nation calls forth the strength of a lion of burgundy.

Medical Discovery: A previously paralyzed man will walk again do to genetic research.

There is great discovery in regards to spinal cord rejuvenation after injury.

Research is around a specific soccer player.

Finding common ground among nations will be very difficult. The United Nations will be in turmoil. Not able to take care of everyone's crosses to bear on limited power and resources. Rich nations against poorer ones as the split widens and the resources are not shared equally.

2015

A Tomb: A calcification of a mummy found of a pharaoh tomb found in Egypt. Many artifacts of Moses time. Excitement over the lost Arc reignited. Finding a hammer made out of gold in the chamber.

A Villain: Montreal, An angel fallen from grace. A man hunt. Not kind. A warrant for his arrest. A man killer. Need to find him first. A legend reborn. Jack the Ripper. Cruel childhood. Inner need for revenge. Authorities will be on the look out. Master of disguises. By the river side, by an old tool shed. Victim bones cry out for revenge. Tall thin man in 30s very calculating not repenting. Justice and mercy will be found on the graves of many.

The plight of the Eagles: New sanctuary. Off limits. Controversy over public lands. New Environmental movement while new toxicants are found from corporate lands. Globalization ceases to amaze with total profits over the proper caring of the lands for future generations. Big clean up. Generic manufactured items are not good for us and spread thorough out food supply. Laws are not equal, and put food supply in jeopardy. Timber from forest not replenished.

Life is difficult for the common man. Too much stress and focus on consumerism. Not enough equality. World economies are link even more as globalization solidifies its gain. Countries are owned by others and leverage their limited resources to meet their corporate needs.

A greener way: Nations look at alternative to gas and oil.

Norway and Greenland looking at thermal energy and wind driven solutions.

An edipse of the sun as people consciousness are starting to rise and taking their power back. More political involvement from the masses and wanted to take back their government. Not wanting to be quite anymore. They don't want blockage, and committee stalemates, but want clear concise leadership for the future of each and every nation.

The Split: A high profile marriage proposal broken that baffles family and friends. Hollywood thought that they would stay together forever for the sake of their children. Money was not a concern, but overall marriage discord. Two very strong personalities broken apart in anger.

Technology: Cycles are going to be speeding up as our technology advances: Birth, death, and Rebirth. Bio-technologies are going to move at a very alarming rate. Faster than our laws and ethic's, and how we regulate and monitor the new products coming into the market place. There will be devices that act like drugs within our neurological pathways. Companies concern more about profits then ethics.

More of the same, Ethiopia will be at war as Africa is drawn into more conflicts. Refugees struggle for survival. It as if they put one fire out, another one will spring up. There will be more action for peaceful solutions as the fires of war just spreads discord among the people of the region.

